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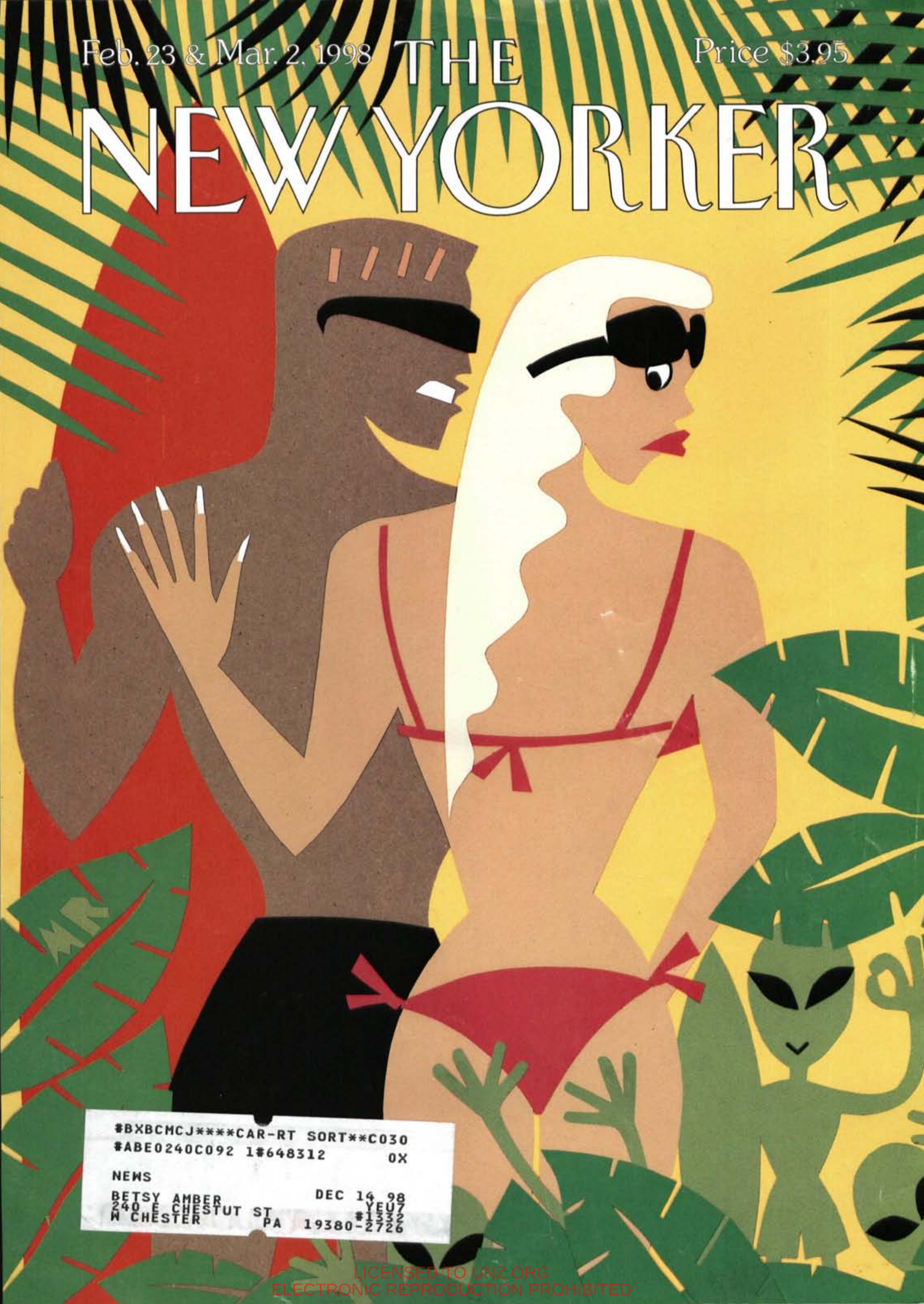

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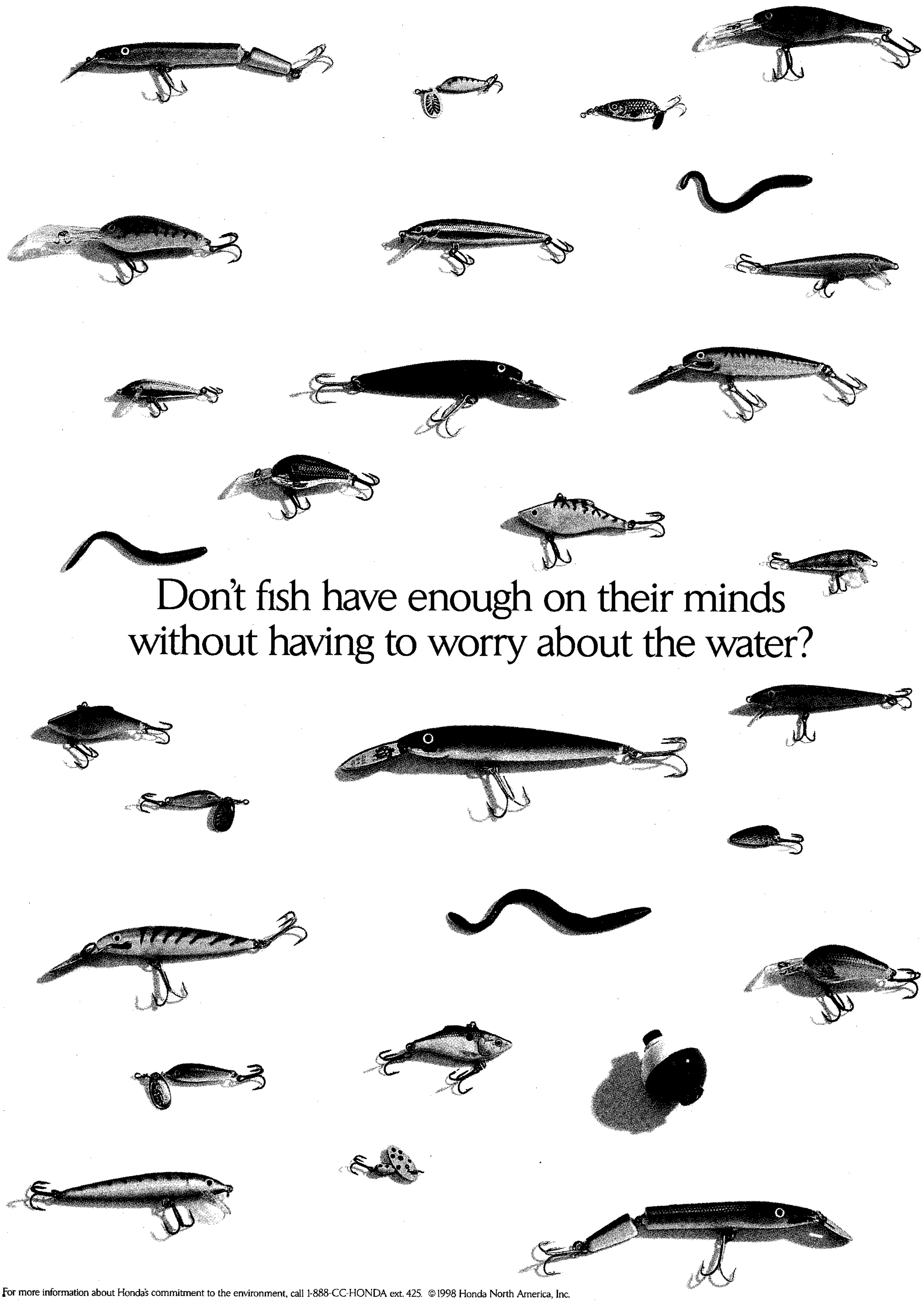
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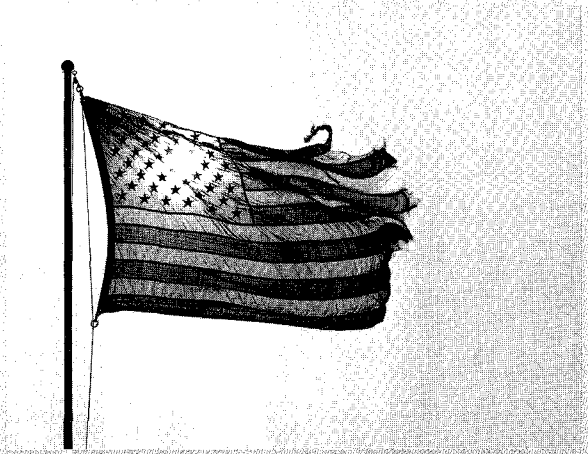

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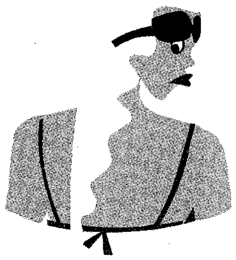

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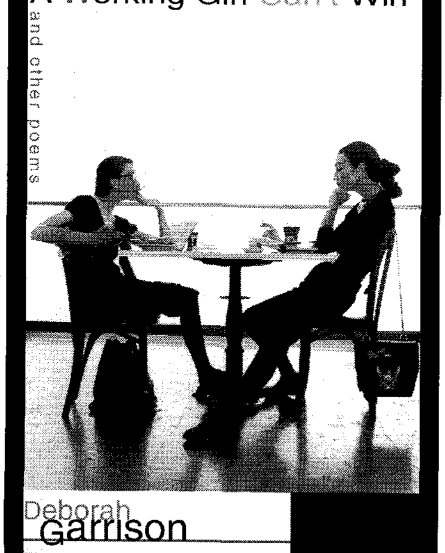

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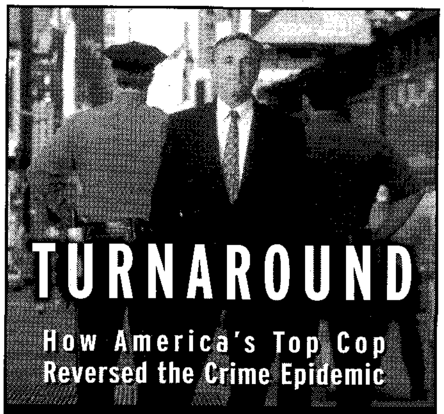

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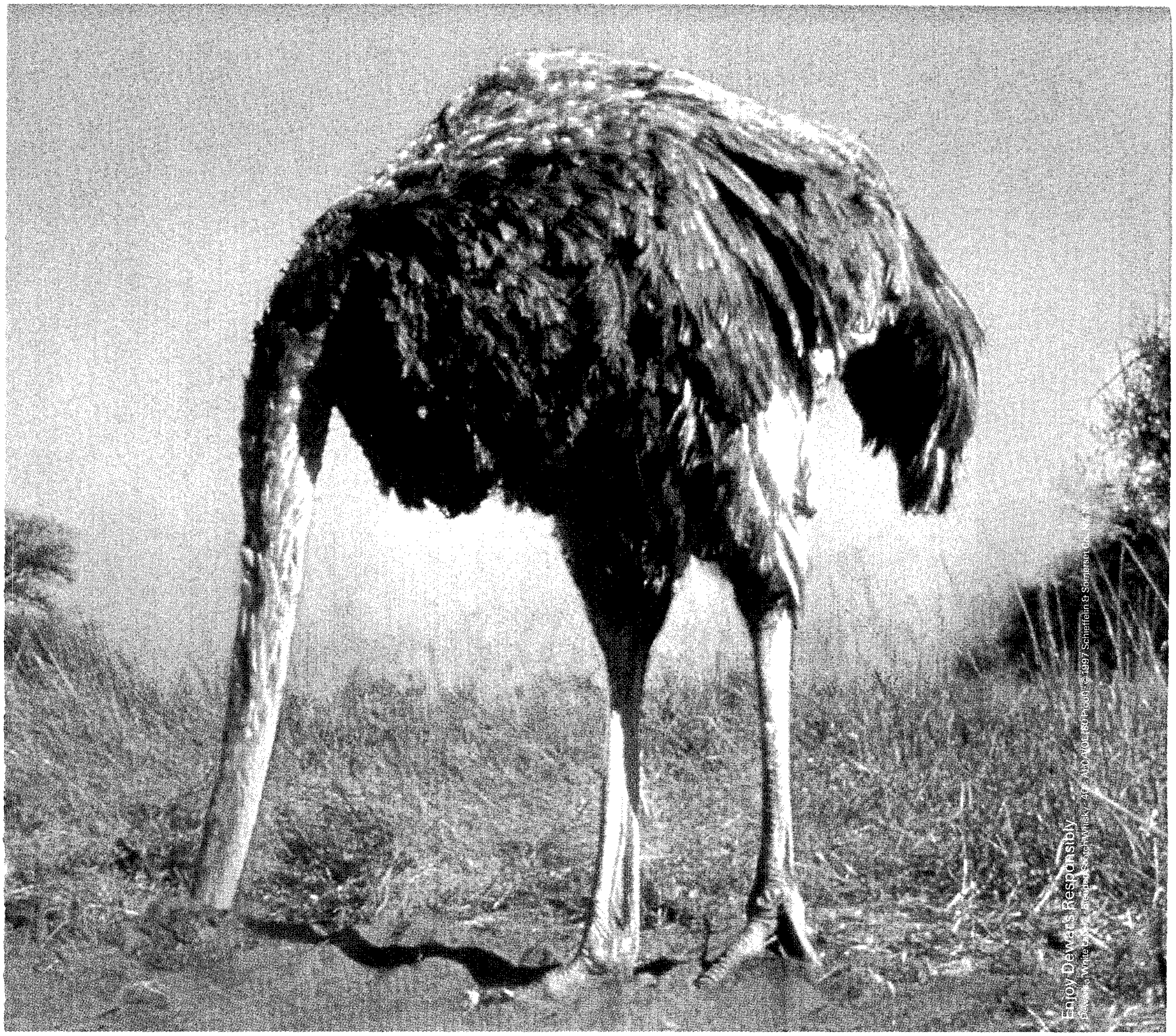
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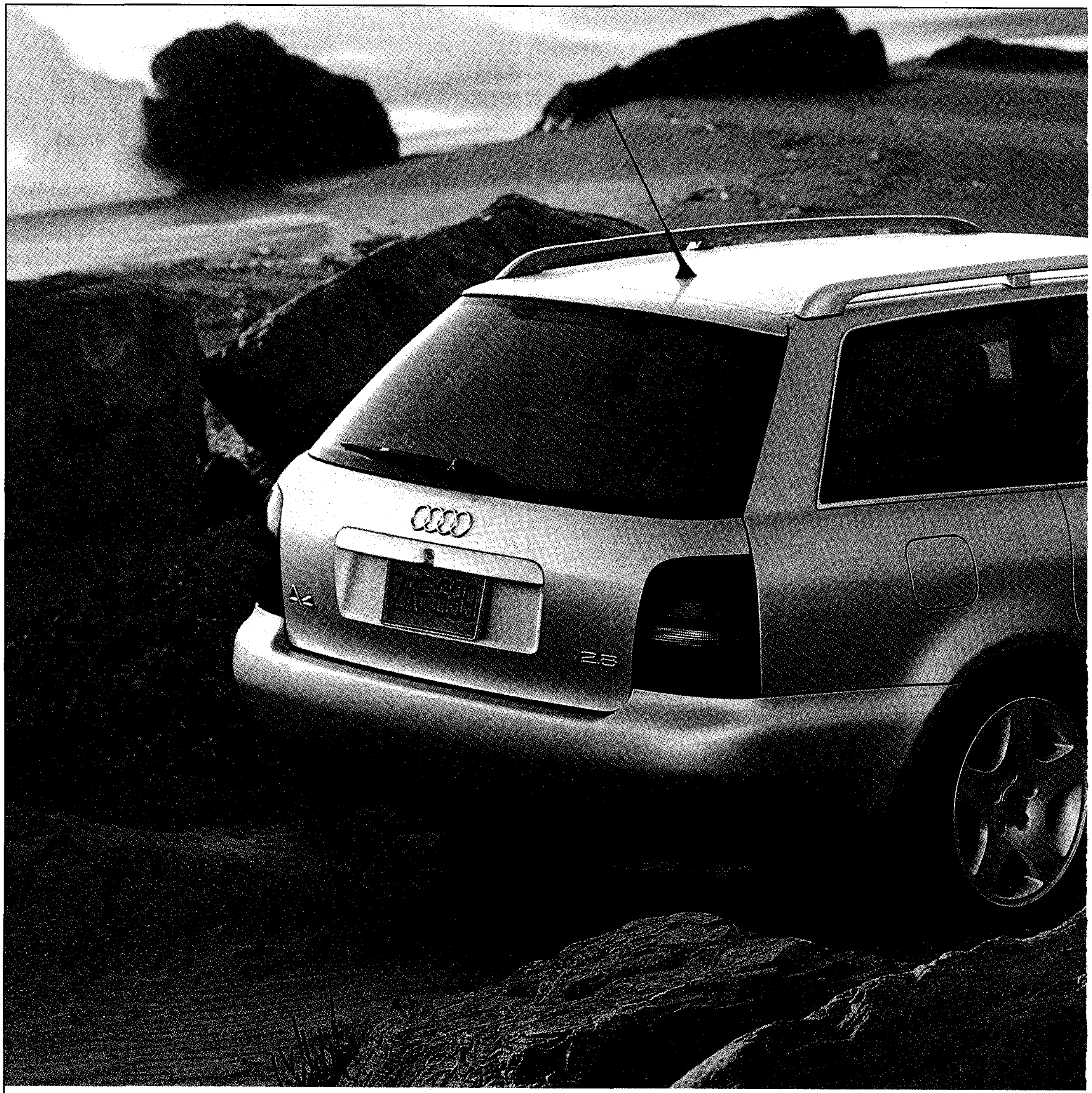

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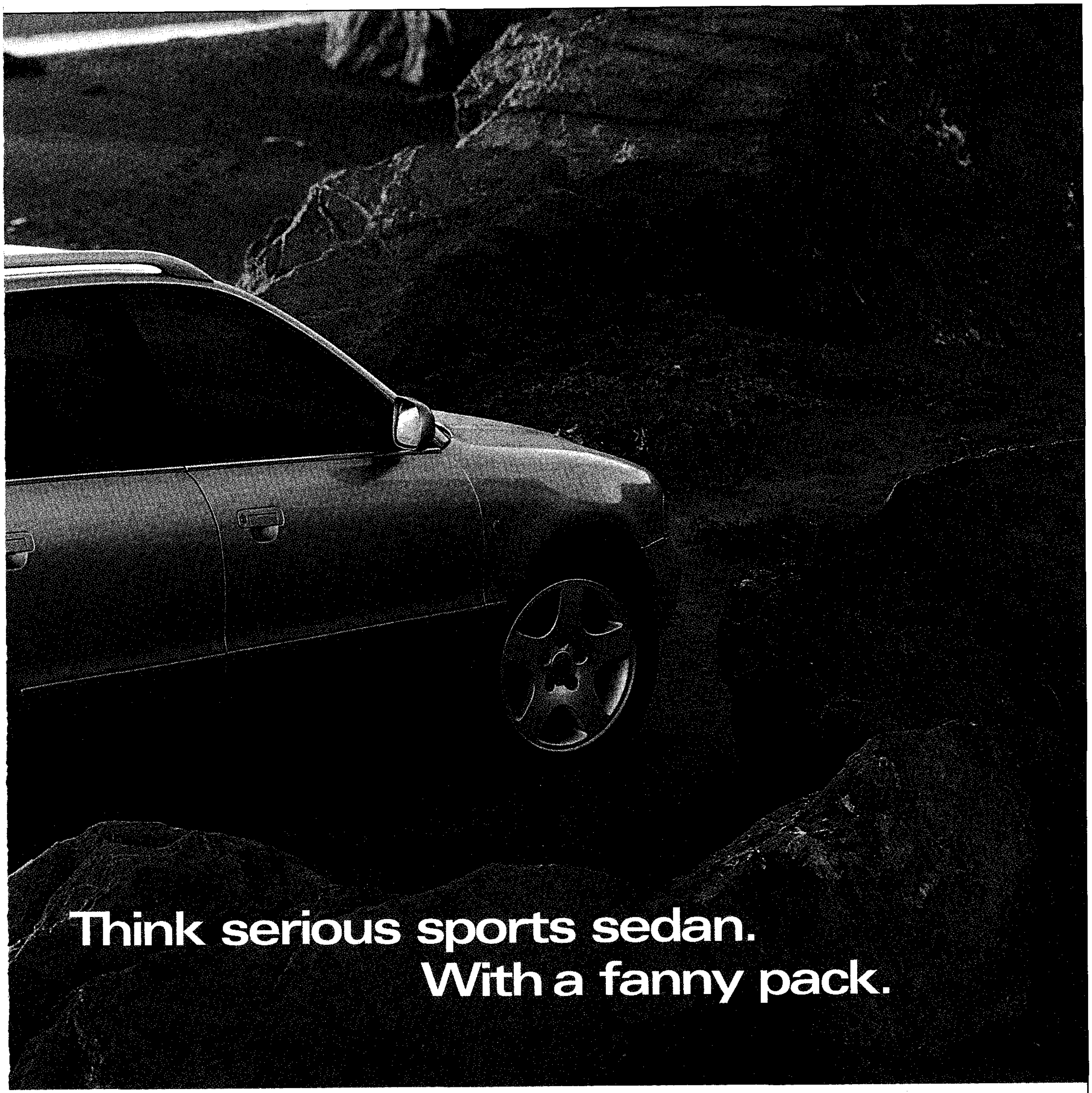

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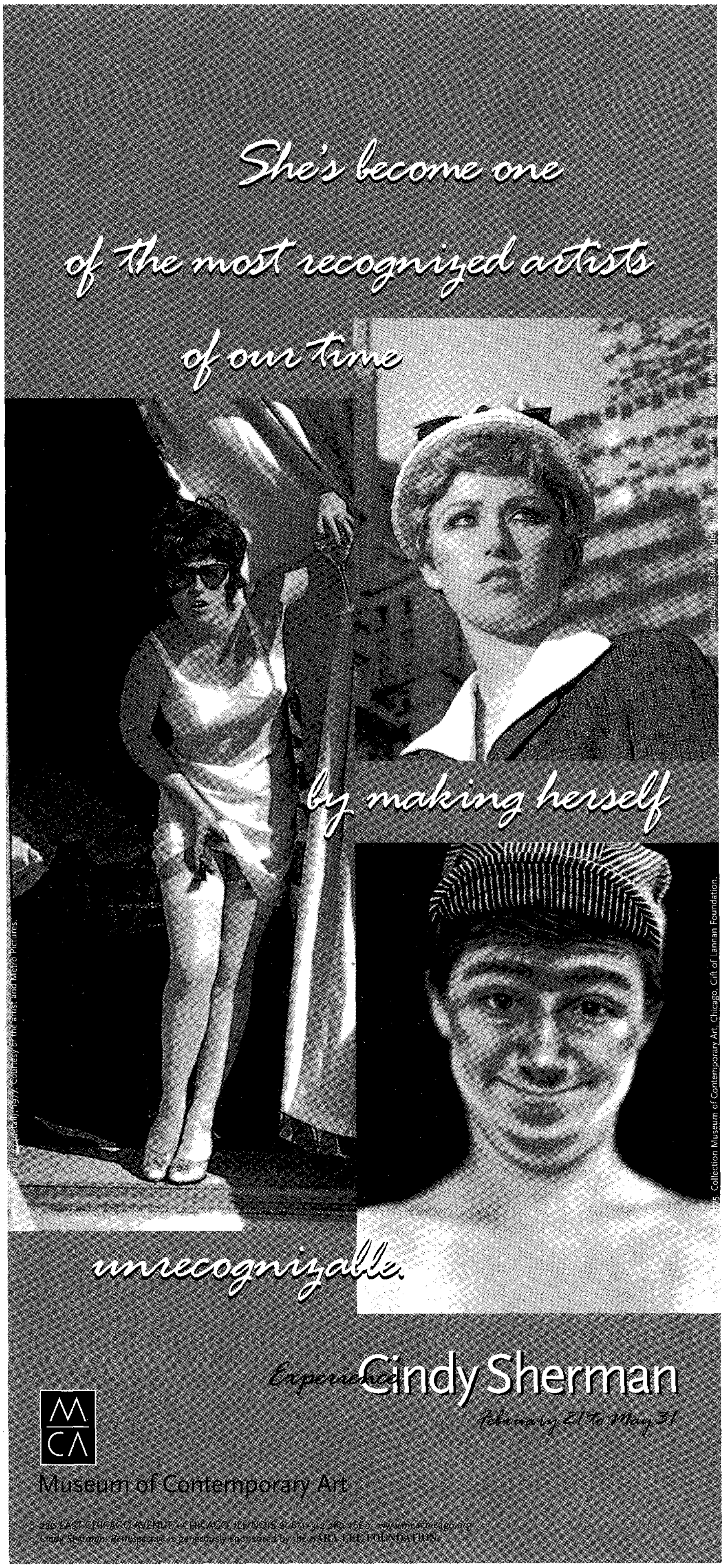
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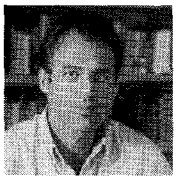

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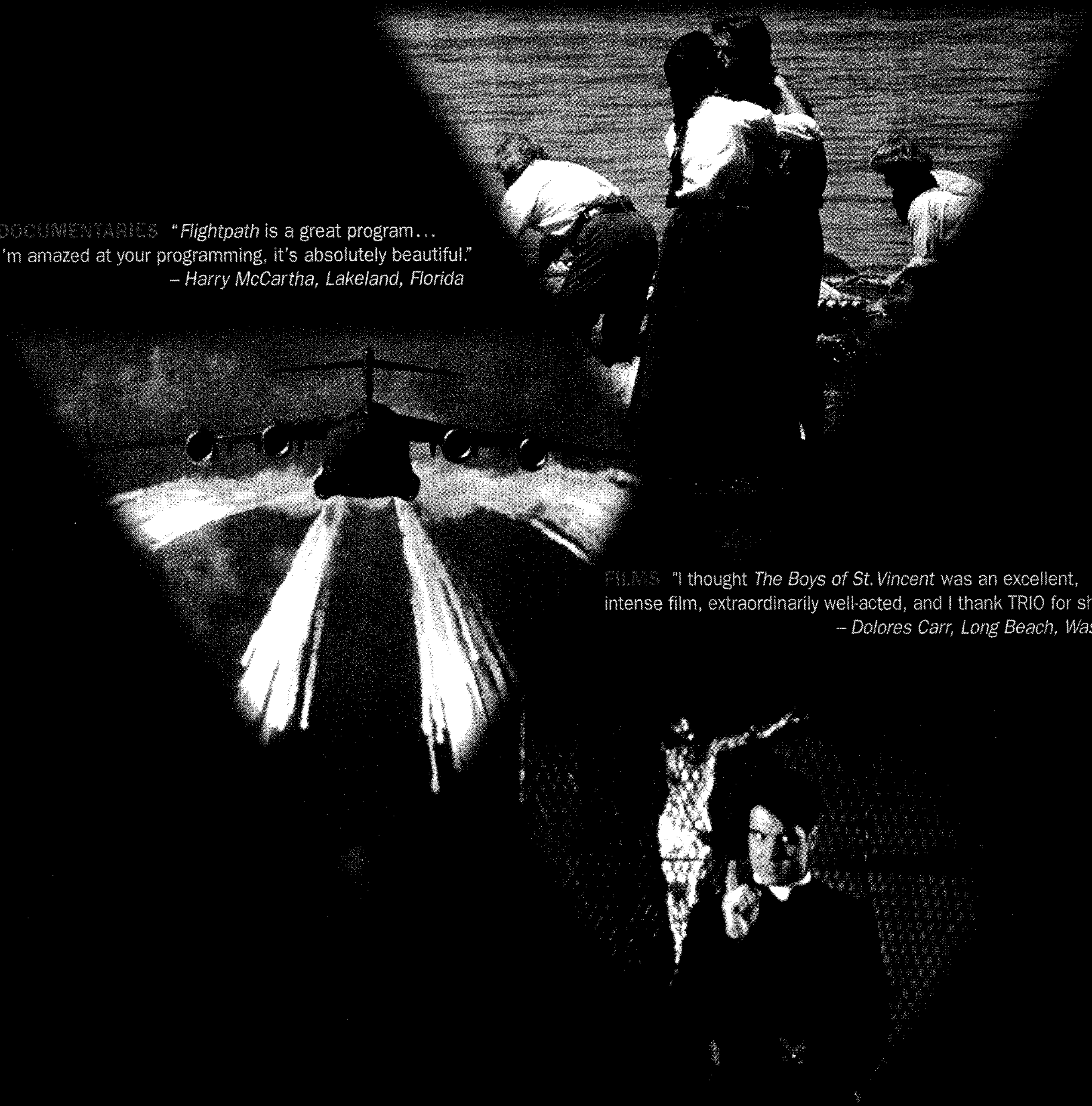

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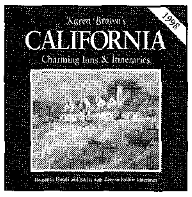

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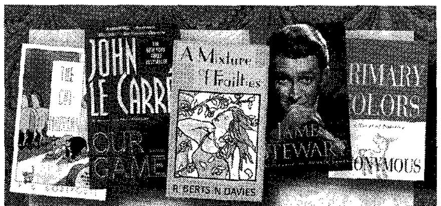

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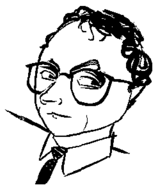

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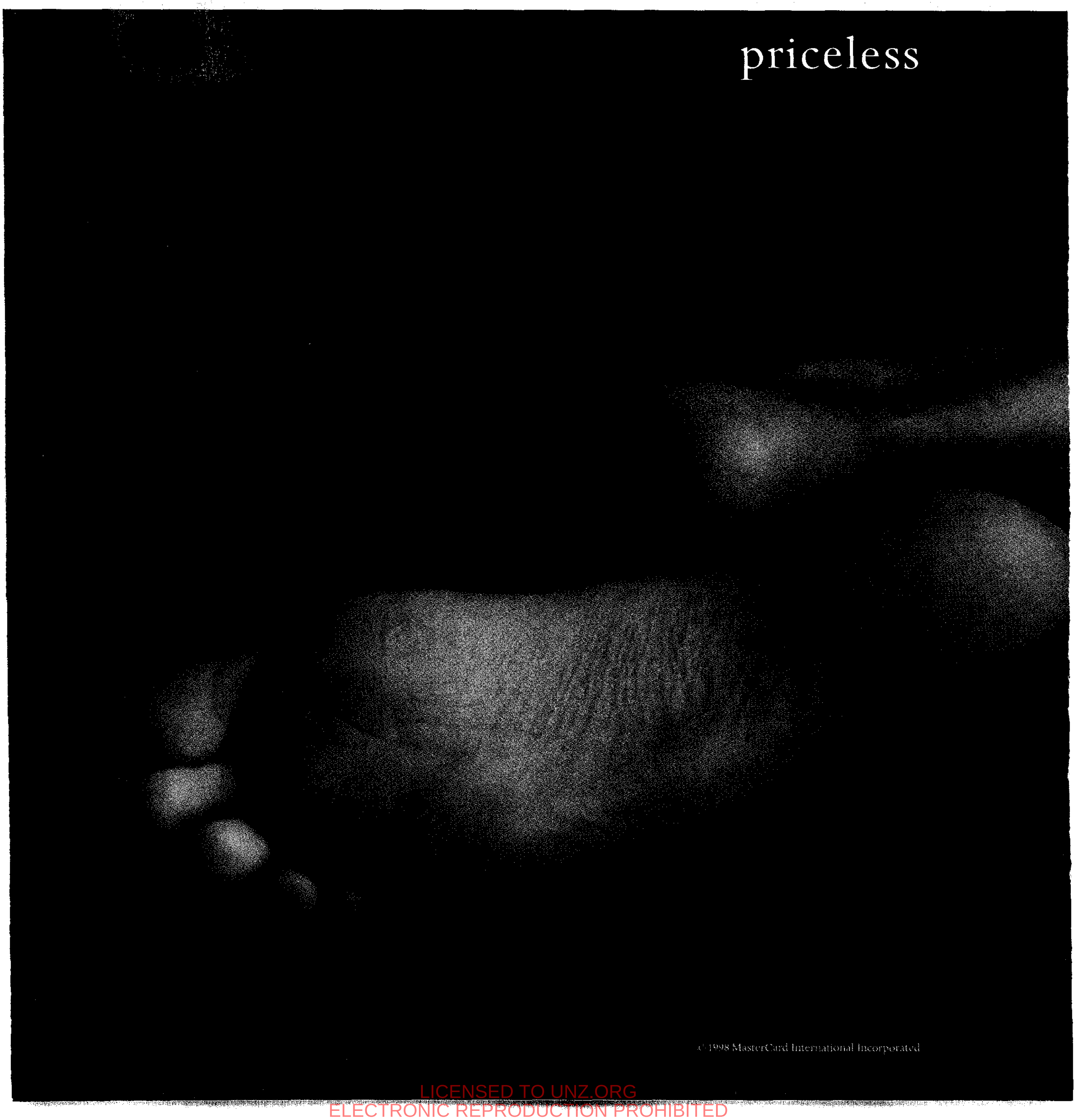

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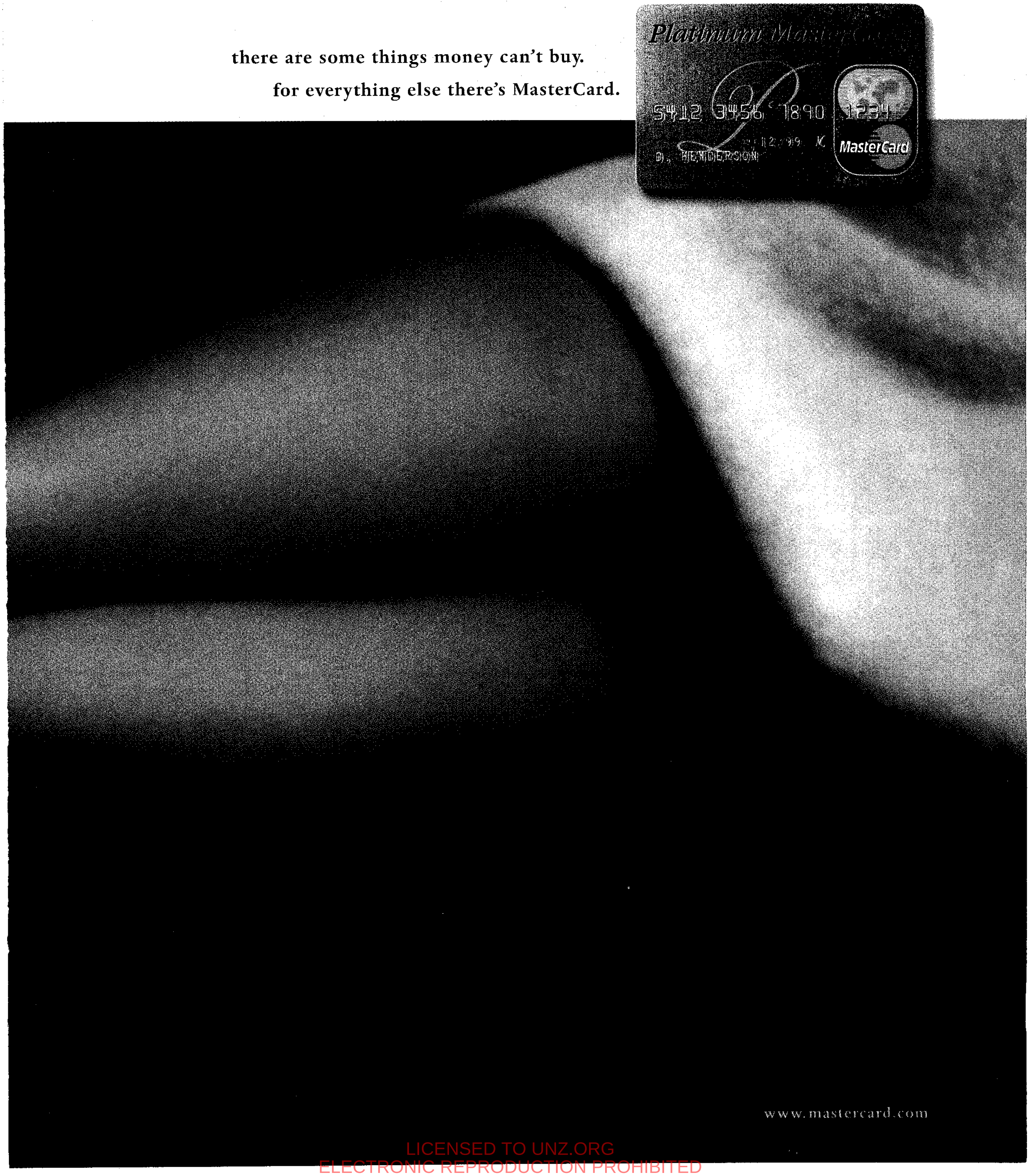
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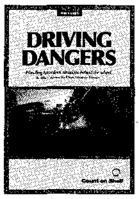

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COMMENT

HOLD EVERYTHING

Who said California runs on empty?

At regular intervals in the twentieth century, intellectuals have amazed themselves with the discovery that California is a void. You can browse for days through books that describe California as horribly vacant or vacantly horrible, or vacant and horrible in equal measure. Pride of place belongs to Nathanael West's "The Day of the Locust," which imagined something "truly monstrous" crawling out of the accumulated fakery of the California landscape. The more disgruntled of the European émigrés who came to California in the thirties heightened the rhetoric: they compared the Golden State none too favorably with the Fascist Europe they had fled. "In 1940, I had my choice between Hitler and Hollywood, and I preferred Hollywood—just a little," the filmmaker René Clair said. In the nineteen-seventies, Joan Didion seized on Charles Manson as the true avatar of California psychedelia: the state was a "white album," a pop product concealing violent messages. Mike Davis recently brought California-bashing up to date with his best-selling sociological tract "City of Quartz," in which Los Angeles is painted as a landscape of paranoid gated communities, corrupt municipal expansion, empty lots, and monuments of industrial ruin.

Americans who live in the forty-nine other states have a troubled relationship with California—one that takes on the inflections of a resentful sibling or a jilted lover. They're suspicious of the beautiful façade; they like to look behind it and see nothing there. (A good therapist would recognize this as a violent defense mechanism set off by a fear of rejection: Am I cool enough? Am I cute enough?) It must also be admitted that Californians themselves are not above ridiculing—even demonizing—their life style. Hollywood likes nothing better than stories of poolside chicanery and evil under the sun; "L.A. Confidential" and "The Big Lebowski" are the latest refinements of the genre. Nature also plays a part in the surrealism of California. As Lawrence Weschler points out in this issue, the light alone gives the place a theatrical air. Think not just of Southern California's amber glow but also of that pearly, foggy scrim in the north.

The illusion of emptiness is another illusion. To talk about California as a blank slate is no longer intellectually honest—perhaps it never was. To begin with, you have to be aware of the sometimes overpowering presence of the past. Far from disappearing overnight, California history never seems to go

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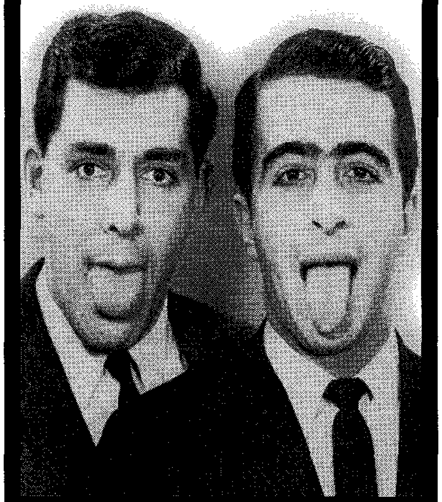

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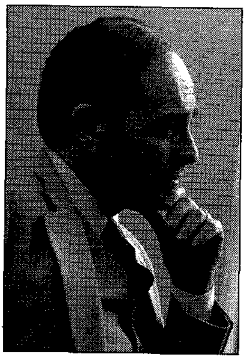
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How did Vincent Bugliosi know (before we ever heard of Monica Lewinsky) that the Supreme Court's decision to allow Paula Jones to sue Bill Clinton would lead to potential disaster? Does John Feinstein think Tiger Woods can survive his agent, his father, Nike, and his adoring public? What does Pete Hamill think can be done to fix the out-of-control media?

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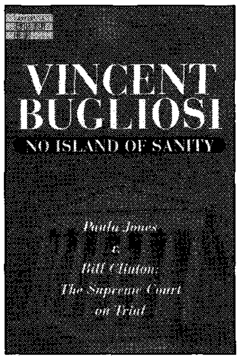
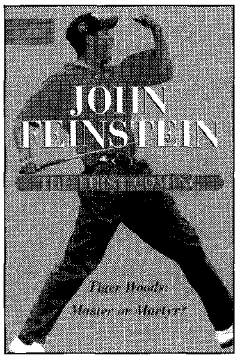
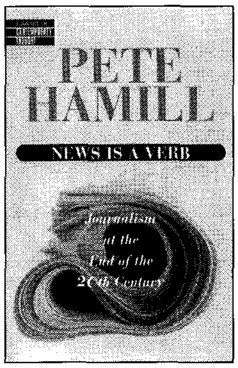
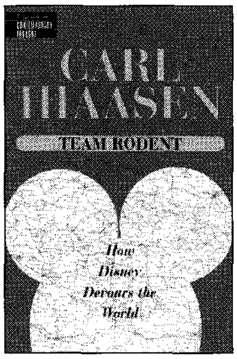
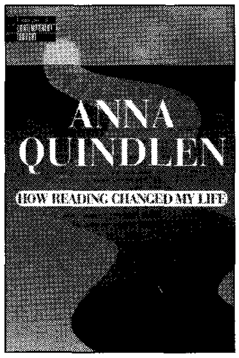

VINCENT BUGLIOSI
NO ISLAND OF SANITY
Paula Jones v. Bill Clinton: The Supreme Court on Trial


JOHN FEINSTEIN
THE FIRST COMING
Tiger Woods: Master or Martyr?


PETE HAMILL
NEWS IS A VERB
Journalism at the End of the 20th Century


CARL HIAASEN
TEAM RODENT
How Disney Devours the World


ANNA QUINDLEN
HOW READING CHANGED MY LIFE

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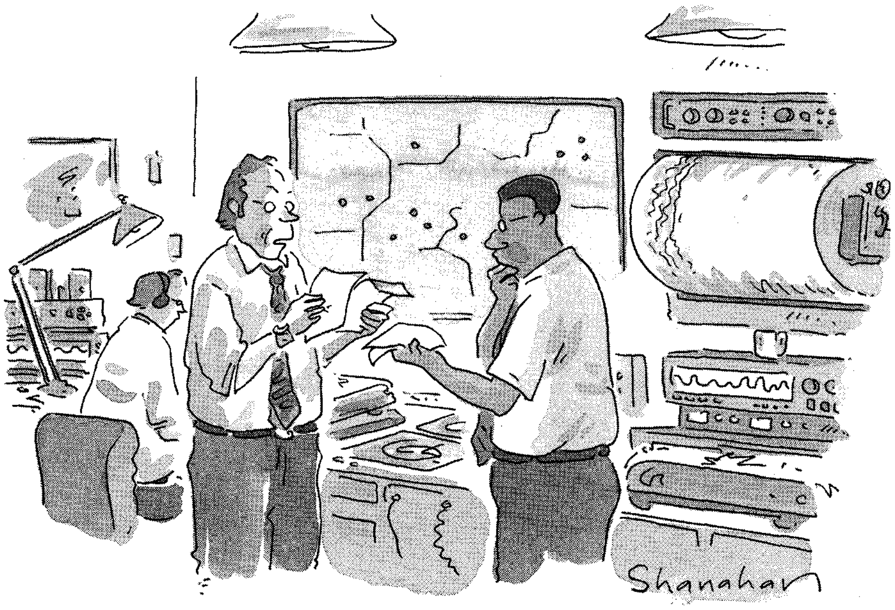

"Once again, the epicenter seems to be Christian Slater."

• •

away. Nothing there ever decays completely: all those faddish incrustations on the landscape—thirties movies palaces, fifties burger joints, countercultural saloons, junked cars of every era—are laid out like sedimentary layers tilted toward the sky. Over time, these pasted-together styles have solidified, become substantial; either that, or they've turned into beautiful ghosts.

California culture is often snubbed as bland and homogenized. In fact, it is founded on a fault line of creative tension. On one side is an entertainment industry of a kind that exists nowhere else in the world. Hollywood populism—with its signature tactic of market saturation—has influenced all the other arts. (Banners on L.A. streets advertise the shiny new Getty Center and the photogenic Philharmonic conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen.) On the other side of the fault is the California tradition of the maverick, who has sought what the experimental composer Harry Partch—the inventor of the forty-three-note scale—called "a way *outside*." Oddball geniuses on the order of Ed Kienholz and Captain Beefheart do not seek abstraction and complexity, as their Eastern counterparts have done; instead, they find havens of unrestrained bizarrerie. Their art is of the "You had to be there" variety. Hollywood's art, by contrast, can be described as "You will be there whether you want to or not."

The two cultures—the marketers and the mavericks—might seem hopelessly at odds, but California's genius for juxtaposition manages to bring them together. Strange meetings are the stuff of the California scene. In no other place could there have been tennis games between Arnold Schoenberg and George Gershwin, or a poem by Bertolt Brecht on the subject of Charles Laughton's garden, or a songwriting collaboration between the Beach Boys and Charles Manson. In California, for two things simply to coexist is sufficient: they don't need to be integrated or interrogated or, God forbid, deconstructed. (Paranoid history—the mode of writing which finds deep meaning in coincidence—is the best way to tell the story of the state.) What's striking in the history of Hollywood is not just the callousness with which the studios treated, say, New York writers or Austrian musicians but the enthusiasm with which those hapless aliens were sought out. It's astonishing, in retrospect, that any money at all was given to Orson Welles for "Citizen Kane," or that dark visionaries like Polanski, Scorsese, and Coppola were given the run of Hollywood in the seventies. And it's strange, on second thought, that a wry eccentric like Jack Nicholson is a leading man. The margin moves to the center, the center moves to the margin. California's trademark flashes of brilliance—from "meteoric rise" to "crash and burn"—add to the endless shimmer.

—ALEX ROSS

SOMEBODY
HAD TO
SAY IT.

NOW
VINCENT
BUGLIOSI
DOES.

The Paula Jones case has sparked a crisis in the White House. And it's the direct fallout, claims Vincent Bugliosi, of the Supreme Court's flawed decision to allow the Jones trial to proceed during Clinton's presidency. In NO ISLAND OF SANITY, the author of *Outrage: The Five Reasons Why O.J. Simpson Got Away with Murder* puts forth a searing examination of how the ruling came about—and how it is emblematic of the general legal insanity that's sweeping our country.

VINCENT
BUGLIOSI
NO ISLAND OF SANITY
Paula Jones v. Bill Clinton: The Supreme Court on Trial

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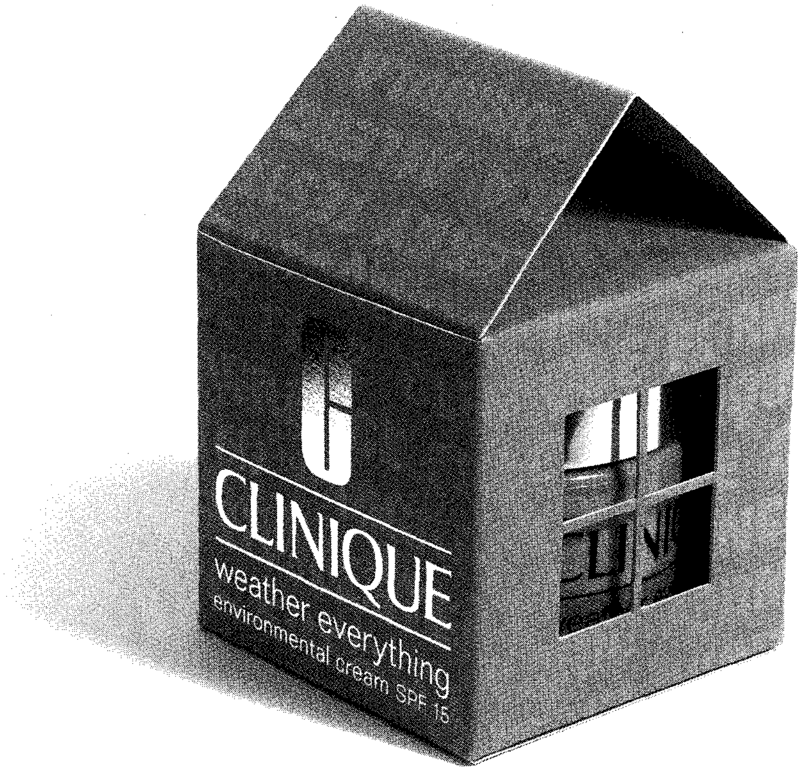

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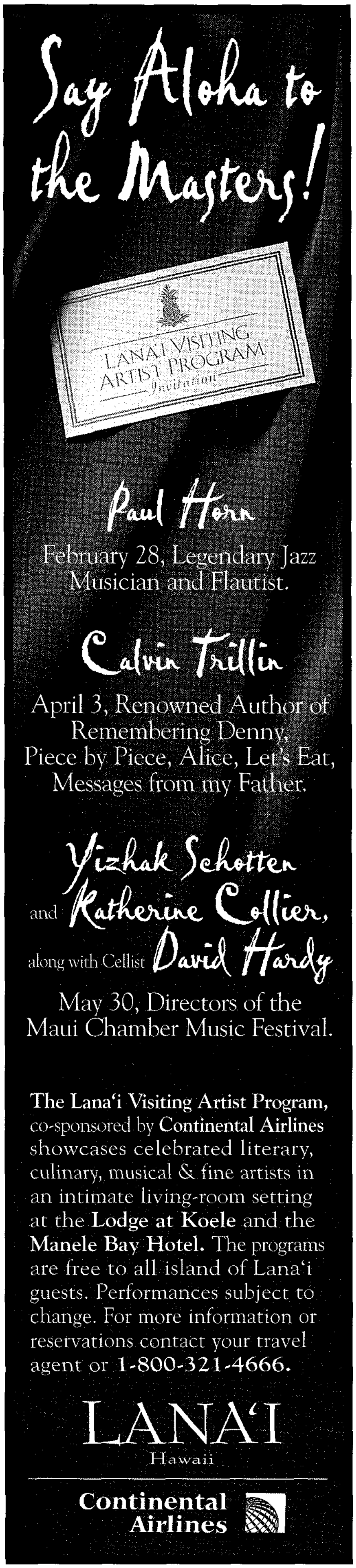

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THE MAIL

RECONSIDERING CUBA

Robert Stone is on the mark in calling for a review of the United States' economic embargo on Cuba (Comment, January 26th). My travels to Vietnam have made it clear that the war we could not win militarily is being won economically. If we allow American companies to operate in Cuba, the Castro regime will most likely just fade away.

Peter M. Ham
Princeton, N.J.

"Bringing Back Havana" (Annals of Preservation, January 26th), by Paul Goldberger, struck me not only as an indictment of the Castro regime's approach to its architectural heritage but also as a neat parallel to Goldberger's earlier article "Landmark Kitsch" (August 18, 1997), about the debate in New York over what constitutes a landmark building. It seems somewhat presumptuous of us to shake our heads over Castro's insensitivity to the theme-park-inspired restoration of Old Havana when we ourselves have overseen a vast Disneyfication of New York City.

Julia H. Toos
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Carl Nagin reports that before the Cuban government shot down two small planes being flown toward the island by members of a Cuban-exile group, early in 1996, Ambassador Bill Richardson may have conveyed assurances that the group's provocative overflights would be stopped in exchange for the release of political prisoners (Annals of Diplomacy, January 26th). As Nagin notes, Richardson denies that such a deal was ever made, and, as the special adviser to President Clinton for Cuban affairs at the time, I believe him: the United States government is powerless to stop anyone who wants to provoke Cuba by violating its airspace, and Richardson wouldn't have offered a promise that could not be fulfilled. Why do critics of this country's Cuba policy want to believe so badly that the United States shares the blame for the planes' being shot down? Could it be that the alternative—that Castro, who has thrived for decades on an adversarial relationship with the United States, is more interested in sending a message to his internal opposition than in easing relations with America—would force such critics to reëxamine the nature of his regime?

Richard A. Nuccio
Cambridge, Mass.

LEGAL INTERPRETATIONS

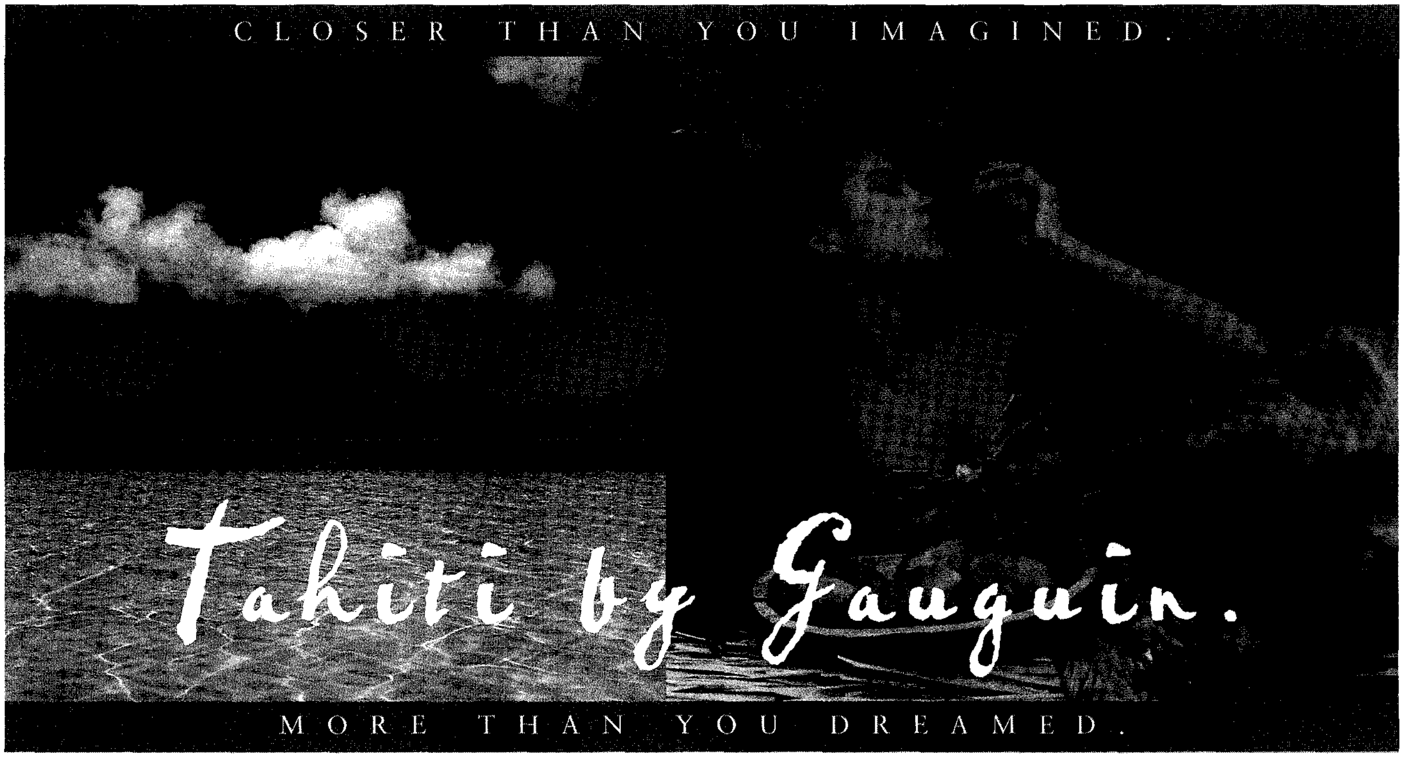
All sex is not sexual harassment. Nothing in my work implies that it is. Jeffrey Toobin's statements to the contrary (in "The Trouble with Sex," February 9th) are lies. The law of sexual harassment at work requires (among other things) that sex be *unwelcome*, a requirement repeatedly stated in my 1979 book, "Sexual Harassment of Working Women," and legally established by the Supreme Court in the case of Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson, in 1986, on which I was co-counsel. Surely we have had enough lies on this subject.

This magazine, by policy, refused to let me see Mr. Toobin's reply, giving him another chance to use me to misrepresent both my work and sexual harassment law.

Catharine A. MacKinnon
Professor of Law, the University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Jeffrey Toobin replies: I reached my conclusions about Professor MacKinnon's work simply by reading her book. The quotes in my article are representative and in context, and the implications I drew from them are fair. Moreover, as I also made clear in the article, such views on consent are hardly eccentric. Indeed, for better or for worse, the position on consent suggested by "Sexual Harassment of Working Women" seems to be the ascendant one, especially in academic settings.

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be faxed to 212-840-8489 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.



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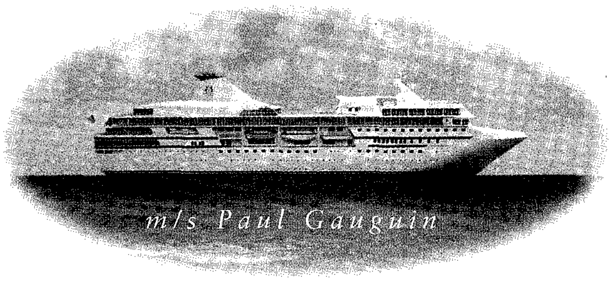

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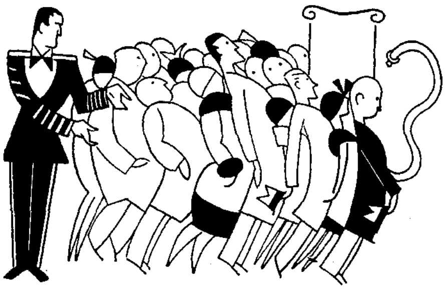

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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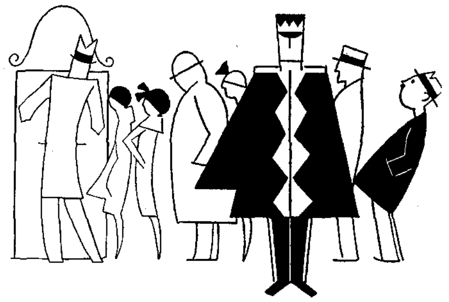


THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Ah, Wilderness!—Debra Monk and Craig T. Nelson lead the cast in a Lincoln Center Theatre revival of Eugene O'Neill's comedy, set on Independence Day in 1906. Previews begin Feb. 19. (Vivian Beaumont. 239-6200.)

Amazing Grace—A murderess (Marsha Mason) reëvaluates her life from her cell on death row, in a drama by Michael Cristofer. A Blue Light Theatre Company production. Staged by Edward Gilbert. Previews begin Feb. 24. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

Art—In the French playwright Yasmina Reza's latest, a debate about a piece of modern art fractures the friendship of three men (Alan Alda, Victor Garber, and Alfred Molina). Matthew Warchus is the director. In previews through Feb. 28. Opens March 1 at 6:30. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Beauty Queen of Leenane—The Atlantic Theatre Company presents a dark comedy, set in County Galway, by the young Irish playwright Martin McDonagh. In previews through Feb. 25. Opens Feb. 26 at 7. (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

Cabaret—Natasha Richardson, Alan Cumming, Ron Rifkin, and Mary Louise Wilson star in a Roundabout Theatre revival of the 1966 Kander and Ebb musical. Sam Mendes is the director. Rob Marshall choreographed and co-directed. In previews. (Kit Kat Klub, 124 W. 43rd St. 719-1300.)

The Deep Blue Sea—Blythe Danner and Edward Herrmann return to the stage in a revival of Terence Rattigan's 1952 drama. Previews begin Feb. 28. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

A Flea in Her Ear—Bill Irwin directs Georges Feydeau's 1907 farce. Mark Linn-Baker leads the cast. The adaptation is by Jean-Marie Besset and Mark O'Donnell. In previews. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

The Handless Maiden—From the Adobe Theatre Company, a contemporary fairy tale by Jeremy Dobrish. Opens Feb. 25 at 7. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 924-0077.)

Hazelwood Jr. High—The New Group goes site-specific with a play by Rob Urbinati, based on an actual incident: murder within a schoolgirl coterie. Chloe Sevigny leads the cast. Directed by Scott Elliott. Previews begin Feb. 20. (Intermediate School 70, 333 W. 17th St. 279-4200.)

I Will Come Back—The Judy Garland impersonator Tommy Femia pursues his livelihood in this musical about the singer's life. In previews through Feb. 24. Opens Feb. 25 at 8. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 239-6200.)

Macbeth—Alec Baldwin and Angela Bassett star in George C. Wolfe's staging of Shakespeare's tragedy. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

The Maiden's Prayer—The Vineyard Theatre presents a new play by Nicky Silver. In previews through Feb. 21. Opens Feb. 22 at 8. (108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

Mamba's Daughters—Target Margin Theatre concludes its season with Dorothy and DuBose Heyward's 1939 drama, set in Charleston's Gullah quarter in the thirties. Previews Feb. 18-22. Opens Feb. 24 at 8 and runs through March 14. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

Nothing Like a Dame—A roster of high-profile female performers, including Blythe Danner, Lea DeLaria, Phyllis Newman, and Elaine Stritch, in a benefit revue. Feb. 23 at 8. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 888-326-3849.)

Richard II—Bradford Cover portrays the king, in a Pearl Theatre staging of Shakespeare's play. In previews through Feb. 22. Opens Feb. 23 at 8. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

Rootless Beauties—Two rarely seen Tennessee Williams one-acts, "Confessional" and "The Mutilated," staged by the Willow Cabin Theatre Company. Previews Feb. 20-March 1. Opens March 2 at 7. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 886-1889.)

The Sound of Music—The hills are alive (aah-aah-aaaaaaaaah) again. Rebecca Luker is Maria. Susan H. Schulman is the director. In previews. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Tallulah's Party—A reworked version of the 1983 musical "Tallulah," starring Tovah Feldshuh as Ms. Bankhead. In previews. (Homefront Theatre, 236 W. 54th St. 581-5866.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Benita Canova—Richard Foreman's latest concoction, a lush exploration of erotic violence, is a memorable, perceptive, and voyeuristic experience. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

Black Humor—Topical comedy, written and performed by the political satirist Lewis Black. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Closes March 1.)

The Capeman—This musical, which marks Paul Simon's theatrical début, is based on a notorious crime that took place in New York in 1959: the killing of two innocent boys by a sixteen-year-old member of a Puerto Rican gang. Some of the melodies are lovely, but the lyrics and the book, which Simon co-wrote with Derek Walcott, wallow in phony pieties about guilt and redemption. Though the show has a few touches of imagination, they aren't enough to free it from its prison of self-satisfied ideas or to give it a feeling of real theatricality. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/9/98.) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Diary of Anne Frank—Theatrically, this revival and reworking of the 1955 play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, under the direction of James Lapine, is generally fine. But the play's realism is also its fundamental flaw. One of the truths we take away from Anne's diary is that we *can't* know what it was like. (12/15/97) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Eyes for Consuela—Sam Shepard's new play, which stars David Strathairn, is an adaptation of Octavio Paz's 1976 short story "The Blue Bouquet." (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

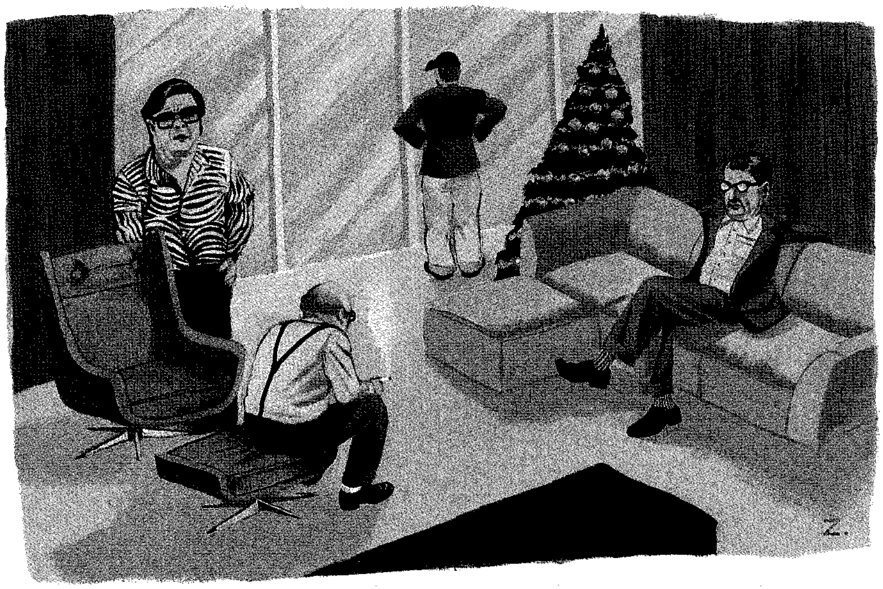
Freak—John Leguizamo ("Spic-O-Rama") portrays dozens of characters in his new one-man comedy. Directed by David Bar Katz. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Good Doctor—Andre DeShields stars in this Melting Pot Theatre Company revival, a 1973 adaptation by Neil Simon of eleven Chekhov stories. (Theatre of the Riverside Church, W. 120th St. and Riverside Dr. 279-4200. Closes March 1.)

Goose-Pimples—Under the clear-eyed direction of Scott Elliott, the New Group brings a near-excruciating realism to Mike Leigh's bleakly comic 1981 portrayal of the cruelty disappointment can inspire. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes March 1.)

Gun-Shy—In Richard Dresser's romantic comedy, an ex-couple finds divorce as difficult to maintain as marriage. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 22.)

Hedwig and the Angry Inch—John Cameron Mitchell wrote and has the title role in a musical about a German Cold War bride turned



"Mizlansky/Zilinsky; or, Schmucks," at Manhattan Theatre Club.

ZOHAR LAZAR

GIORGIO ARMANI

rock singer. (Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

Jackie—A complete delight. The playwright, Gip Hoppe, may be satirizing what we think we know about the former First Lady (Margaret Colin), but he does it with such heart and high comedy that you may not want to leave the theatre. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

John Cameron Mitchell, in "Hedwig and the Angry Inch."

JP FORREST

Joseph Gabriel Magic '98—Mr. Gabriel comes to New York by way of Las Vegas. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

June Moon—Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman's 1929 comedy, set in the world of Tin Pan Alley, is a loving satire of show-biz and musical-comedy conventions, and it has been given an appropriately loving revival under the direction of Mark Nelson. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

The Lion King—The director Julie Taymor has created a theatrical event far more textured and original than the animated film, submerging the audience in a mythic universe; it's like being in a dream awake. The show's high visual style, however, is in sharp contrast to its low verbal one. (11/24/97) (New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

The Little Tommy Parker Celebrated Colored Minstrel Show—Carlyle Brown's drama about a black minstrel troupe. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 501-6093. Closes March 8.)

Lypsinka Is Harriet Craig!—The drag artistes Lypsinka and Varla Jean Merman, in a song-and-dance version of the 1950 Joan Crawford film. (Mother, 432 W. 14th St., at Washington St. 539-7585. Closes March 8.)

Marc Salem's Mindgames—The mentalist claims that his highly entertaining mind-reading act is both hocus-pocus-free and scam-free. Still, his fascinating "tricks" seem like magic, and at times you feel like you're the only person in the audience who isn't a plant. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Mizlansky/Zilinsky; or, Schmucks—Nathan Lane and Lewis J. Stadlen star in a new comedy by Jon Robin Baitz. Staged by Joe Mantello. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

My One Good Nerve—Ruby Dee's one-woman show. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Closes March 8.)

Never the Sinner—John Logan's 1985 play about Leopold and Loeb, the teen-age millionaires who murdered a child in Chicago in 1924, sweeps its audience into the boys' friendship without ever losing sight of the brutal murder—a balancing act that Mr. Logan and the director, Ethan McSweeny, carry off seamlessly. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

The Old Neighborhood—David Mamet's three elegant, autobiographical one-act plays full of laughter and lament. Serious, beautiful, and short: an almost impossible feat these days on Broadway. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Pride's Crossing—Tina Howe's new play is a tedious switchback ride up a mountain of memories from the life of Mabel Tidings Bigelow, who is ninety and once swam the English Channel. Fortunately, Mabel is portrayed by Cherry Jones, who polishes all the tics, fumbles, and feisty outbursts of a nonagenarian to a high shine. Jack O'Brien directed. (1/5/98) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Ragtime—E. L. Doctorow's epic novel chronicling three turn-of-the-century New York families (Wasp, Jewish, and black) is here transformed into a historical pageant designed along the magisterial theatrical lines of Noël Coward's "Cavalcade" and Jerome Kern's "Showboat." It's a big, brave, passionate gamble that brings the American musical back to its roots as populist commercial entertainment. Masterfully directed by Frank Galati. (2/2/98) (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

R & J—Four students at a boys' boarding school mount a production of "Romeo and Juliet," in this adaptation by Joe Calarco. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 354-2220.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—The sleight-of-hand artist returns to the stage with an encore production of his 1994 one-man show. Directed by David Mamet. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 787-3471.)

The Scarlet Pimpernel—This new musical, based on the Baroness Orczy novel, has a lot going for it (if you don't count its music and lyrics, which are dreadful and appalling, respectively): its charismatic star, Douglas Sills, Andrew Jackness's sets, and Jane Greenwood's costumes. Peter Hunt directed. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

1776—Scott Ellis's lean, lively production of Sherman Edwards and Peter Stone's still fresh 1969 musical about the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. (9/8/97) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Shopping and Fucking—In this small, sketchy piece of British boulevard nihilism, the first-time playwright Mark Ravenhill, who definitely has a gift for dialogue, attempts to dramatize capitalism's warping effect on life and relationships by putting the play's various lost souls through a crude catalogue of fashionable degradations, from vomiting to ass-licking to murder. The result seems tricked out rather than thought out. Co-directed by Gemma Bodinetz and Max Stafford-Clark. (2/16/98) (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

The Show Goes On—A compendium of songs by two seventyish musical-theatre pros, the lyricist-librettist Tom Jones and the composer Harvey Schmidt. Schmidt plays the piano and Jones provides a charming review of their forty-year partnership, which was responsible for "The Fantasticks," among other musicals. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820. Closes Feb. 28.)

The Sunshine Boys—A revival of Neil Simon's comedy about two irascible old vaudevillians, starring Ye Olde Odd Couple of television, Tony Randall and Jack Klugman. The sandpapery friction that the twosome created so successfully on TV isn't much in evidence—they seem reduced to lovability. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Theatre for a New Audience—Presenting repertory performances of "Richard II" and "Richard III." Ron Daniels is the director. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

Two Pianos, Four Hands—With the Canadian keyboardists Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

A View from the Bridge—Arthur Miller's tragic story of the longshoreman Eddie Carbone and his obsession with his orphaned niece proves, in this Roundabout Theatre revival, a potent and durable American fable. (1/5/98) (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300. Closes Feb. 22.)

Visiting Mr. Green—Jeff Baron's sweet if predictable Upper West Side comedy, about two Jewish men of different generations. Eli Wallach, in a masterly performance, finds great dignity in the title character, an eighty-six-year-old widower. Lonny Price directed. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

Wang Dang—Tom Noonan stars in his own dark comedy, about a filmmaker past his prime. (Paradise, 64 E. 4th St. 354-2220. Closes Feb. 28.)

You Can't Take It with You—The National Asian American Theatre Company and the Ma-Yi Theatre's co-production of the 1936 Kaufman and Hart comedy. (Connelly Theatre, 220 E. 4th St. 505-3003. Closes March 7.)

LONG RUNS

AS BEES IN HONEY DROWN: Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **FOREVER TANGO:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE:** Century, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200. . . . **THE LIFE:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—Feb. 18 at 8: "Mozartiana," "Circle of Fifths," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 8: "Urban Dances," "Allegro Brillante," "Zakouski," and "Prodigal Son." . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 8: "Urban Dances," "Stabat Mater," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 2: "Open Strings," "The Cage," "Other Dances," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 8: "Serenade," "Stabat Mater," and "The Four Temperaments." . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 3: "Serenade," "Circle of Fifths," and "The Concert." . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 8: "Allegro Brillante," "Duo Concertant," "Prodigal Son," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 8: "Serenade," "Open Strings," and "The Four Seasons." . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 8: "Kammermusik No. 2," "Duo Concertant," "Circle of Fifths," and "The Four Seasons." . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 8: "Raymonda Variations," "Open Strings," and "The Four Temperaments." . . .

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¶ Feb. 28 at 2: "Serenade," "Stabat Mater," and "The Four Seasons." . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 8: "Serenade," "Schoenberg Variations," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "The Four Temperaments." . . ¶ March 1 at 3: "Who Cares?," "Stabat Mater," and "I'm Old Fashioned." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

National Ballet of Spain—Feb. 20 and Feb. 24-25 at 8, Feb. 21 at 2 and 8, and Feb. 22 at 3: "Los Tarantos," "Ritmos," "Soleá por Bulerías," "Mensaje," and "Luz de Alma." . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 8, Feb. 28 at 2 and 8, and March 1 at 3: "La Vida Breve," "Zapateado," "Grito," and "Medea." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Vaganova Ballet Academy—Principal dancers from the Kirov join forces with students from the Vaganova Ballet Academy of St. Petersburg (the alma mater of Nijinsky, Balanchine, Nureyev, and Baryshnikov) in scenes from classic story ballets, including "Don Quixote," "Sleeping Beauty," and "La Bayadère." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Feb. 25 at 8 and Feb. 26-28 at 7:30.)

Doug Varone and Dancers—The nine-member troupe presents repertory work and two premières, "Knave" and "Mercury." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 17-20 at 8, Feb. 21 at 2 and 8, and Feb. 22 at 2 and 7:30.)

National Ballet of Spain, at City Center.

N. ASCENCIOS

"Aide Mémoire"—The Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, from Kibbutz Ga'aton, in Upper Galilee, presents a full-length work devoted to the Holocaust. (Joyce Theatre. Feb. 24-27 at 8, Feb. 28 at 2 and 8, and March 1 at 2 and 7:30.)

Janet Lilly and Friends—The former Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane dancer appears in solos and, with fellow Jones/Zane veterans Seán Curran and Heidi Latsky, in two trios. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Feb. 19-22 at 8:30.)

"Puta Santísima"—The Mexican-born choreographer Jaime Ortega has borrowed characteristics from Catholic saints and Aztec divinities in creating his androgynous "holy whore." The score, by Humberto Alvarez, is played on pre-Columbian instruments and sung in Nahuatl. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie. Feb. 26-March 1 at 8:30.)

Carnival—Dance Theatre Workshop continues its choreographers' showcase. Feb. 17-18 and Feb. 26-27 at 8: **sally silvers**. . . . ¶ Feb. 19-20 and Feb. 28 at 8 and March 1 at 3: **tiyé giraud**. . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 8 and Feb. 22 at 3: **stefa zawerucha**. . . . ¶ Feb. 24-25 at 8: **seán curran**. . . . ¶ March 3 at 8: **david neuman**. (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Through March 22.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Billy Taylor Trio, with Arturo Sandoval—Any jazz pianist could lose his cool with a pile driver like the Cuban trumpeter Sandoval egging him on—so it's a good thing that Billy Taylor is such a decorous one. Sandoval, an extroverted virtuoso out of the Clifford Brown and Dizzy Gillespie schools, is a truly rousing player, but a little discretion wouldn't tarnish his credentials one bit. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 19 at 7.)

Cyrus Chestnut—Equal parts Art Tatum and Count Basie, this pianist is a maniacal two-handed speed demon who can turn around and deliver the goods with a single note. Part of Lincoln Center's Jazz at the Penthouse Series. (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, 165 W. 65th St. 721-6500. Feb. 19-20 at 8.)

Mary Lou Lord—Perhaps the world's most successful subway busker, this Boston singer, who specializes (like most buskers) in other people's material, earned her rebel stripes recording for the hip indie label Kill Rock Stars. Now, she's threatening to become one. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391. Feb. 19 at 8:30.)

Ben Folds Five—Though there's nothing particularly original about this likable trio from Chapel Hill, its ability to channel "square" piano-driven pop à la old Billy Joel and Elton John (and, to be fair, Todd Rundgren and Freddie Mercury on their pianocentric classics) and marry it to a post-punk sensibility makes the group stand out from its techno and guitar-powered coevals like a black-and-white thumb. Singer Ben Folds is a major talent: an excellent singer and a songwriter of earthly pain. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Feb. 20 at 8.)

Third Eye Blind—A lesser evil than such prepackaged dreck as Savage Garden, this modern-rock quartet from San Francisco was in any case one of the past year's biggest new breakthroughs. With the more rough-and-tumble attitudinizing of Smash Mouth. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Feb. 27 at 7.)

Art Ensemble of Chicago—Still mavericks after four decades, and still rankling the mainstream with the wildest of them. It's easy to praise the individual gifts of the quartet (retired saxophonist Joseph Jarman hasn't been replaced): trumpeter Lester Bowie's copious tone, saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell's exacting phrasing, bassist Malachi Favors's brutish swing, drummer Famadou Don Moye's rhythmic generosity. But the group's fearless parachute-corps bond is its real strength, and its sporadic appearances are not to be missed. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Feb. 28 at 8.)

Mighty Mighty Bosstones—Top-flight ska-punk. (Roseland. March 1 at 7:30.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—The Israeli guitarist **mordy ferber** (Feb. 18) may be a bit of an unknown here, but he's got good taste in sidemen: **george garzone,** the Boston demi-legend, on tenor saxophone; **eddie gomez,** the quick-as-the-wind bassist and former Bill Evans associate; and **adam nussbaum,** a New York stalwart, on drums. Feb. 19-21: **jackie's blues bag.** Strangely, the tenors (**javon jackson** and **justin robinson**) outnumber the altos (**vincent herring**) at this saxophone salute to Jackie McLean, the premier bop-and-beyond alto. These days, younger players are studying McLean's music intently, and that's good news: his delicately idiosyncratic balance of tradition and innovation can only act as a corrective to by-the-book playing. Feb. 25: Vocalist **carla white.** Feb. 26-28: The **jacky terrasson** trio. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Feb. 22: Four Latin percussion virtuosos take charge: **ray barretto** welcomes **"potato" valdez,** while **poncho sanchez's** group makes room for the legendary **mongo santamaria.** Feb. 24-March 1: The **danilo perez** trio. Pianist Perez is as technically dexterous and harmonically astute as anyone on the scene, and few of his peers have his gift for rhythm. Latin accents pepper his formidable chops, and he imbues everything he plays with personality. With the **michel camilo** trio. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The amazing **eartha kitt** has the run of the Café Carlyle through March 7. . . . ¶ Across the hall, pianist **peter mintun** is in charge at Bemelmans Bar.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Even on songs you've heard dozens of times before, **jimmy scott** (through Feb. 22) makes you listen for the next lyric as if it were a password to love and happiness. Feb. 24-March 1: The **dick hyman** trio. It's no use trying to stump Hyman: there's nothing he doesn't know about the jazz-piano repertoire. And he's also mastered the art of leading a soft-spoken chamber-jazz trio. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **les paul.** Dining.

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Feb. 22: The **sherman irby** trio. Altoist Irby isn't going to make you forget Charlie Parker, but he does have the kind of wide-open emotionalism that goes with youthful vigor. The tugging throb in his tone is a sign that he's in for the long haul. Guitarist **ed cherry** sits in on Feb. 20 and 21. Feb. 24-March 1: In the old days, organists stuck to the organ and pianists stuck to the piano, but keyboardist **larry goldings** will have none of that. For the first part of the week (Feb. 24-26), as he leads an organ trio with guitarist **peter bernstein** and drummer **joe strasser,** he's got his funky hat on. He finishes up the engagement (Feb. 27-March 1) behind the piano with a straight-ahead quartet.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Feb. 22: **gregg bendian's interzone** brings the vibraphonist together with some equally daring players: bassist Mark Dresser, guitarist Nels Cline, and drummer Peter Erskine. Also on Feb. 22, **relativity** returns Erskine to the stage with new-jazz giant Marty Ehrlich on saxophone (for starters) and Michael Formanek on bass.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Feb. 22: The tables are turned as saxophonist **gary bartz** becomes sideman for his accomplished drum-

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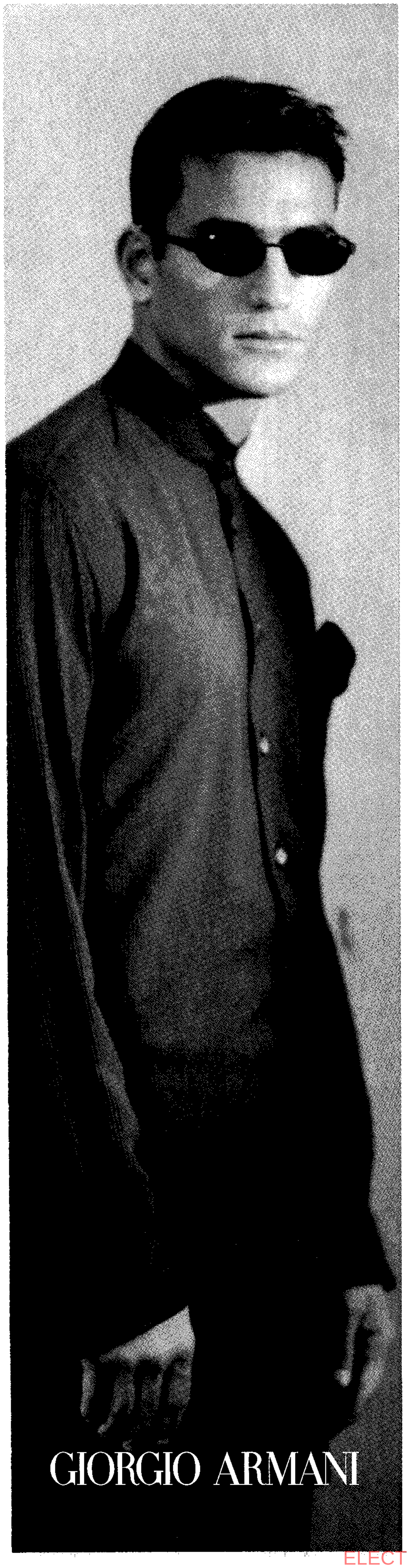


mer, **GREG BANDY**, one of those unflashy old-schoolers who remind you what jazz percussion is all about. Bandy adds class as well as rhythmic friction to Bartz's band, and there's no reason he shouldn't do the same for his own. Feb. 24-March 1: **JONNY KING**, an increasingly individualistic pianist who recently published an informed and lively primer called "What Jazz Is," leads a unit of other younger talents—saxophonist **DON BRADEN**, vibist **STEVE NELSON**, and bassist **ED HOWARD**—and an eminent veteran, drummer **VICTOR LEWIS**. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Feb. 24: The **RON CARTER** sextet. The addition of tenor saxophonist **HOUSTON PERSON** could transform the entire personality of bassist Carter's sometimes anemic sextet. Person is a big-toned stylist who's unafraid of naked blues; if Carter tries to counter him with his pipsqueak piccolo bass, the evening could take on David-and-Goliath-like drama. Feb. 24-March 1: The **JAMES CARTER** quartet. Showboaters abound in the new generation of jazz stars, and James Carter may be their Evel Knievel. The behemoths of the tenor sax—Don Byas, Gene Ammons, David Murray—hover above, whispering their secrets in his ear. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Feb. 21: Like an old married couple, the engaging pianist **JOANNE BRACKEEN** and her longtime colleague, the revered bassist **CECIL MC BEE**, seem to complete each other's musical sentences. Feb. 24-28: Amiable, dependable, sleek—pianist **JOHN BUNCH**, guitarist **BUCKY PIZZARELLI**, and bassist **JAY LEONHART** aren't in the business of ruffling feathers. What they do best is weave a broadloom of gently intoxicating swing.

ROCK, ETC.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Feb. 23: The Bluebird Café, a songwriters' forum hosted by **KIM RICHEY**, with country stars **RAUL MALO** (the lead singer for the Mavericks) and **PAM TILLIS**. Feb. 26: **"RINGING IN MY EARS,"** an evening in memory of Hoboken folk musician Don Brody, who died in December, featuring the **BONGOS**, **MARSHALL CRENSHAW**, and **DAR WILLIAMS**. Feb. 27: Now in his seventies, the flat-picking guitar master **DOC WATSON** is still the same avatar of American roots music that he was when the folklorist Ralph Rinzler discovered him back in 1960. Now that Bill Monroe is gone, you'd be hard pressed to find someone more deserving of a Smithsonian exhibit. With singer-songwriter **DAVID OLNEY**. Feb. 28: **PHOEBE SNOW**, the great mid-seventies jazz-inflected folksinger. March 2: **ED PALERMO** and his big band play the music of Frank Zappa.

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—The wacky, all-female power trio known as **CAKE LIKE** is in on Feb. 19. **RAILROAD JERK** (Feb. 21) has a refreshing pre-grunge sound that suggests the Violent Femmes and Camper Van Beethoven with some harmonica and hobo rhymes thrown in.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Feb. 20-21: **SON SEALS**, one of the leading figures of post-sixties blues. Feb. 27: The sweet wail of R. & B. singer **FRANKIE LEE**. Feb. 28: **RONNIE EARL AND THE BROADCASTERS**. A New York native, Earl spent most of the eighties ably manning the guitar post in Roomful of Blues. Since forming his own band, he's been a mainstay on the blues circuit.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—Mississippi hill-country blues legend **R. L. BURNSIDE** shares the stage on Feb. 24 with another septuagenarian Magnolia State guitarist, **T-MODEL FORD**.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Feb. 20: Up-and-comer **PATTY GRIFFIN** is a fiery redhead with an emotional range to rival Janis Joplin's and a songwriter's gift for despair that suggests the recent efforts of Bruce Springsteen. With Troy Campbell. Feb. 22: The **SUN RA ARKESTRA**, directed by Marshall Allen. Feb. 24: **"SWEET BLINDNESS: THE SONGS OF LAURA NYRO,"** a tribute to the icon who died last summer. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Feb. 20 features the crepuscular crunch of **CONGO NORVELL**. Feb. 26: **ISOTOPE 217** creates beautiful sonic tapestries, sometimes atmospheric, sometimes funky and intense, using hypnotic strands of guitar, cornet, trombone, and percussion.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—The **SMOKING POPES**, an up-and-coming combo with a singer whose phrasing suggests Frank Sinatra on steroids, drop in on Feb. 18. With **MENTHOL**. Feb. 19: Boston alterna-popsters **LETTERS TO CLEO**. Feb. 21: Jump and jive with the **MIGHTY BLUE KINGS**. Feb. 24: The **DEVLINS**.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Feb. 19: **DE LA SOUL**. Feb. 20: **BR5-49**, a high-power hepcat quintet from Nashville which mixes frenetic covers of rockabilly and country-and-Western classics with its own time-warping originals. The house band of your dreams, the **BROOKLYN FUNK ESSENTIALS** (Feb. 21) explode the dictionary of funk with fearsome authority. Feb. 24: **JIM LAUDERDALE** has a little bit of Roger Miller-style mischief in his soul, but his carefully crafted, slightly surreal song confections are far from novelty numbers. With the bluegrass guitarist **RALPH STANLEY** and the octogenarian bluegrass ensemble **HACKBERRY RAMBLERS**. On Feb. 27, **LISA LOEB**, the bespectacled waif who first rose to fame with her charming tune "Stay," brings in her post-folk winsomeness. With the excellent neo-folk duo **ONCE BLUE**. Feb. 28: **BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO** and the **HOLMES BROTHERS**.

Twilo, 530 W. 27th St. (268-1600)—Feb. 23: Hotshot electronica gurus the **CRYSTAL METHOD** share a bill with hipster sound collagist **DAVID HOLMES**.

LARA TOMLIN

Ben Folds Five, at Irving Plaza.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Conversion by Candlelight: The Four Magdalens by Georges de la Tour (1593-1652)." Through March 15. . . . ¶ "Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era." Through March 1. . . . ¶ An exhibition at the Costume Institute devoted to the work of Gianni Versace. Through March 22. . . . ¶ "Richard Pousette-Dart (1916-92)." Through Feb. 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism," a centennial exhibition that includes sketches, photographs, and maquettes of architectural projects by the Finnish modernist. Through May 19. . . . ¶ A retrospective of the works of Fernand Léger follows the metamorphoses of the French painter (1881-1955), from Fauvist to Cubist to Social Realist. Through May 12. . . . ¶ "Fabrications," four architectural projects, two solo and two team efforts, presented in installations in the sculpture garden. The show is augmented by video links to allied exhibits at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Wexner Center for the Arts, in Columbus, Ohio. Through April 28. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"China: 5,000 Years," in both Guggenheim venues, divides the country's art into modern examples (at the SoHo branch) and older ones (here): the latter include jades, bronzes, tomb ceramics, stoneware, sculptures, paintings, and calligraphy. Through June 3. . . . ¶ "After 'Mountains and Sea': Frankenthaler 1956-59." The eponymous painting is famous for a reason: it signaled the artist's arrival, at the age of twenty-three, at a stature of consequence and influence. In retrospect, it isn't all that surprising to learn that her technique (staining canvases with diluted, runny paint that melded line and colors) was the product of rigorous formal experimentation. Through May 3. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"China: 5,000 Years." The downtown portion of the museum's retrospective of Chinese art is devoted to modern examples, from 1850 to the present. Through May 25. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"Bill Viola," a mid-career survey devoted to the video artist. Through May 10. . . . ¶ "Arthur Dove: A Retrospective," the first major exhibition in more than twenty years to examine the work of the Empire State abstractionist, who lived in a string of rustic accommodations—a farm, a houseboat, the custodian's quarters of a yacht club, an abandoned post office by a tidal pond—while fashioning palpitant, nonfigurative works reflecting his preoccupation with the natural world. (See also Galleries—Uptown.) Through April 12. . . . ¶ "1948," an excellent small show in the Collection in Context series, curated by Greil Marcus and Elizabeth Sussman. In the short text that accompanies the show, Marcus identifies 1948 as the year in which "the United States began to break apart and reform." Video monitors screen loops from the 1948 Democratic Convention, where Hubert Humphrey proposed the first civil-rights plank in the Party's history. The paintings and sculptures support this narrative of anxiety and dissent, but in oblique rather than didactic ways. In the context of the emerging Beat movement, the title of a marvellous Lee Krasner painting, "White Squares," takes on new connotations. There are also terrific (or, at least, curious) pictures by Hopper, Gottlieb, Reinhardt, and Grosz, as well as Thomas Hart Benton's hilarious and brilliant "Poker Night (From 'A Streetcar Named Desire')." Through March 15. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Scattered Petals, Fallen Leaves, Shards of Glass: The Work of Bing Hu," the latest in the museum's Working in Brooklyn series, presents sculptures—windshield-scrap curtains, glass-bottle chandeliers—that incorporate debris the artist picked up near her Williamsburg studio. Through May 10. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Dahesh Museum, 601 Fifth Ave., at 49th St. (759-0606)—"Rosa Bonheur: All Nature's Children." Paintings, sculptures, and pencil studies of horses, dogs, wild boars, and so on, by the bold, recently resurrected nineteenth-century animalier. Bonheur loved animals with an ardency that bordered on the idolatrous (featured is a photograph of her lounging with one of her many pets, a lioness named Fathma, who was a favorite subject), and some of her grander pictures suffer as a result. But there are some lovely pastorals from the Pyrenees, and a particularly beautiful portrait of a fox who looks not so much sly as touchingly apprehensive. Through Feb. 21. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St. (977-7170)—"A. G. Rizzoli: Architect of Magnificent Visions." The first museum survey devoted to work of the California eccentric (1896-1981) who created elaborate architectural portraits ("Mother Symbolically Represented/The Kathredal" [*sic*]), which he later linked into an elaborate utopian city that he called Y.T.T.E. ("Yield to Total Elation"). His art was essentially unknown in his lifetime. (The presentations he mounted in the family parlor were so scantily attended that he was able to create portraits of almost every visitor.) His drawings were recently rediscovered in the rafters of a grandnephew's garage. Through March 8. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (869-8089)—"The Romanovs: Their Empire, Their Books" harks back to the days of the tsars and the illuminated books that were every bit as lavish as their more notorious hoards of art and jewelry. Salomon Room; through Feb. 28. . . . ¶ "A Secret Location on the Lower East Side: Adventures in Writing, 1960-1980" posts the mimeographed publications of three generations of New York School poets, from Ashbery, Koch, and O'Hara to Berrigan, Padgett, Waldman, Mayer, and Myles. Through July 25. (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Gustave Courbet (1819-77)—Later paintings, most of them dazzling, willful seascapes and rich, voluptuous landscapes. Toward the end of his life, Courbet returned to the landscape of his youth, the Loue Valley in the Jura Mountains, and his superb paintings "Château d'Ornans" and "Gorge in the Jura" suggest the magical way place can capture a child's imagination and never give way. Through Feb. 28. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays.)

Arthur Dove (1880-1946)—"Dark Abstraction," a dense, luscious oil from the twenties, which suggests the bare trunks and branches of trees in a deep, dark forest, together with several small, airy, semi-abstract watercolor and pencil sketches from the thirties and forties—of sand pits, clouds, wind, approaching snowstorms—which, by contrast, have a dreamy quality, as though rendered by a Baudelairean flaneur lost in happy contem-

GIORGIO ARMANI

plation of the world. Through Feb. 28. (Dintenfass, 20 E. 79th St. 581-2268.)

DONALD JUDD (1928-94)—Early fabricated work, a range of sculptural types from 1965 to 1976, by this pivotal minimalist. Judd had a reputation as a curmudgeon, but within the confines of his reductive art, he could manage extraordinary and unexpected sensuousness: for example, an untitled "stacked" piece from 1970, in which the artist combines shiny brass with red fluorescent Plexiglas. Go to this show and see why Judd remains one of the most important artists of the postwar period. Through March 14. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292.)

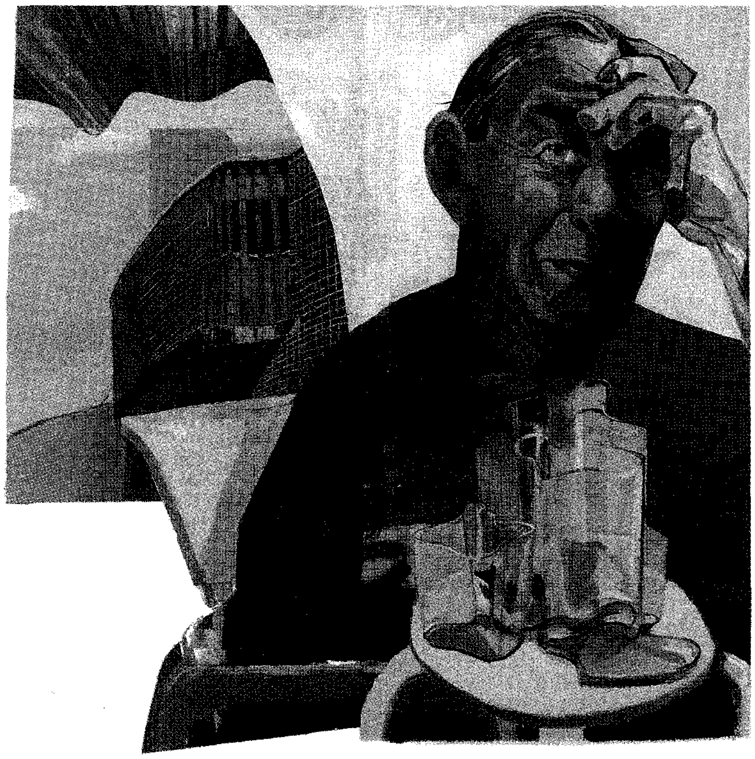
HELEN TORR—A childlike poetry suffuses this appealing collection of works in oil, watercolor, gouache, and charcoal, in which autumn leaves dance, a pair of horses graze beneath abstract green clouds, and a dandelion is painstakingly rendered in all its fuzzy minutiae. Torr was married to Arthur Dove, and although after viewing these pictures you can understand why her talent was never recognized in the way his ultimately was, you can also see the ways in which he might have found her language irresistible. Through Feb. 21. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 535-5767.)

"A CENTRAL PARK FOR THE WORLD: NEW YORK'S ADIRONDACK PARK"—This captivating show offers a tasting menu of everything conceivably related to the huge upstate park (twice the size of Yellowstone and Yosemite combined), including a shiny red guide boat and an assortment of old fishing rods, rifles, rock-climbing boots, and bottles of insect repellent (Schoonmaker's Fly Dope); Thomas Cole's beautiful painting of Schroon Lake, a few pretty Hudson River School renderings of Lake George, and a couple of lovely wood engravings, of Wilmington Falls and the trees of the Saranac and the Racquette; and some marvellous examples of stick furniture, fashioned from birch branches, twigs, and big, gnarled roots. Through April 3. (PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St. 713-2885. Open weekdays.)

"THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS"—Works by Anthony Caro, Paul Feeley, Kenneth Noland, and Jules Olitski, a quartet of sculptors and painters who came out of Bennington College, where they were encouraged in their muscular brand of abstraction by the critic Clement Greenberg, who regularly visited the campus. Alan Solomon's 1966 article for *Vogue*, in which he coined the triple-pun moniker (which slyly combines the Vermont military detachment, Noland's Black Mountain apprenticeship, and Greenberg's beneficent gaze), is reprinted in the catalogue. Through Feb. 28. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. 752-0124.)

"RUBBER"—A beautiful group show of works involving the title substance, curated by Anne O'Sullivan, including pieces by such art-historical stalwarts as Bruce Nauman and Richard Serra and a number of more recent ones by younger artists. The postminimalist art of the sixties packs more punch than the contemporary stuff here, but then again art of the sixties usually does. Through Feb. 28. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454.)

SHORT LIST—CAROL DIEHL, Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through March 14. . . . **JANET FISH**, DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111. Through March 7. . . . **SAM FRANCIS**, Gray, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 472-8787. Through March 31. . . . **LINDEN FREDERICK**, MB Modern, 41 E. 57th St. 371-3444. Through Feb. 28. . . . **MORRIS GRAVES**, Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Through March 28. . . . **KAZUKO INOUE** and **JERRY MC LAUGHLIN**, Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 988-6870. Both shows through Feb. 28. . . . **ANNE KRAUS**, Clark, 24 W. 57th St. 246-2205. Through March 7. . . . **LOREN MAC IVER**, De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050. Through March 14. . . . **CRAIG MC PHERSON**, Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669. Through Feb. 28. . . . **WES MILLS**, Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888. Through Feb. 21. . . . **DANIEL MORPER**, Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907. Through Feb. 28. . . . **LINDA SOKOLOWSKI**, Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 307-5730. Through March 7. . . . **MANOLO VALDES**, Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Open Mondays; through Feb. 28. . . . **HELEN MIRANDA WILSON**, McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. 319-1996. Open Mondays; through April 4.



"Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism," at MOMA.

RICCARDO VECCHIO

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

JOAN JONAS—"Songdelay" (1973) and new works, which together form an installation that compellingly illustrates the continuities in this seventies pioneer's art. "Songdelay," here seen in video, was originally a short 16-mm. black-and-white film documenting performances by some fellow-artists. As a time capsule, it's extraordinary, returning you to the mood of do-whatever experimentation that still prevailed in the early to mid-seventies. "My New Theatre II" (1998) recapitulates, in an obliquely narrative manner, the artist's persistent interest in task-oriented performance and the vagaries of perception. Through Feb. 28. (Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. 727-7366.)

HELEN MARDEN—Abstract paintings and works on paper. Marden, a contemporary of Ellen Phelan, Jennifer Bartlett, and Elizabeth Murray, has only recently come to the fore. Her work veers between the violence of broad, slashing strokes and lyrical delicacy; her colors suggest the East. The pale ghost of Henri Michaux seems to float in and out. Through Feb. 28. (Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753.)

INGO MELLER—Abstract paintings by a German artist who uses broad swipes of the brush on raw canvas (although the effect could hardly be called spontaneous). The swaths of pigment are arrayed in roughly gridlike formations. It's hard to know whether these works are intended as sincere painterly expressions or ironic pastiches à la Gerhard Richter—or both. Through Feb. 28. (Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.)

SHORT LIST—KEITH EDMIER, Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through March 7. . . . **GRAHAM GILLMORE**, Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930. Through March 14. . . . **GUY GOODWIN**, Maynes, 529 W. 20th St. 741-3318. Through Feb. 28. . . . **ANNA RUTH HENRIQUES**, Liebman Magnan, 552 W. 24th St. 255-3225. Through March 21. . . . **GARY HUME**, Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through Feb. 28. . . . **MARTIN G. LARRALDE**, Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through Feb. 26. . . . **MATTHEW MC CASLIN**, Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. 929-0500. Through March 7. . . . **PATTY MARTORI**, D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460. Through March 14. . . . **ROSS RUDEL**, Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 645-1701. Through March 7. . . . **JOHN WESLEY**, Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555. Through March 21. . . . **JOCKO WEYLAND**, Martz, 529 W. 20th St. 206-3686. Through March 15. . . . **BETTY WOODMAN**, Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Through Feb. 28.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

IRENE HARDWICKE—A lovely, lovelorn, hymeneal show of oils on wood. The artist has covered the bodies of her pale and naked brides with magical botanical specimens and with folk wisdom and Biblical quotations in print so small that getting close enough to read them feels as intimate as kissing. Through Feb. 28. (Bodell, 13 E. 7th St. 477-1820.)

WERNER HOEFLICH—"Below the Surface," a series of accomplished abstract paintings, which should be a treat for connoisseurs of the modernist brushstroke. In some of this young artist's most successful pictures, evenly spaced, utterly flat stripes alternate with vaporous, drizzly washes and skeins of paint, loosely suggesting a marriage of Frank Stella and Helen Frankenthaler—and, as unlikely as that sounds, it works. Through March 7. (Davies, 23 Commerce St. 243-6840.)

ANSELM KIEFER—"Your Age and Mine and the Age of the World," four enormous new paintings of extraordinary beauty and poignancy, accompanied by three handmade books of photographs. The operatic heaviness that has sometimes marred Kiefer's output is wholly absent here. The title of the show suggests its contemplative tone; at the top of one eponymous painting, of a looming pyramid, are the words "für Ingeborg Bachmann," referring to the Austrian poet who once wrote, "It's not you I've lost, but the world." Through Feb. 28. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828.)

"FOOD"—A hilariously straight-faced presentation from the Food archive: documents, photographs, practically prehistoric videos, even a chunk of wall, all relating to the coöperative SoHo restaurant founded by Caroline Goodden, Gordon Matta-Clark, Tina Girouard, et al., in 1971. There was an infectious let's-put-on-a-show anarchy to the artist-run enterprise and its spinoffs. Matta-Clark's grin as he stands next to Holly

Solomon inside "Dumpster" (an open-air mockery of a dwelling, set up near the restaurant with a flock of umbrellas for a roof) brings back the neo-Bolshevik goofiness of SoHo's low-rent heyday. Through March 1. (White Columns, 154 Christopher St. 924-4212. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Group Show—Sculptures by Kiki Smith and Anne Chu and a painting by Byron Kim. Through Feb. 28. (AC Project Room, 15 Renwick St. 219-8275.)

Short List—**CHRISTOPHER BUCKLOW,** Kasmin, 74 Grand St. 219-3219. Through March 14. . . . **MARIE JOSÉ BURKI,** Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through March 14. . . . **ELIZABETH CATLETT,** June Kelly, 591 Broadway, 226-1660. Through March 4. . . . **GEORGE CONDO,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through March 7. . . . **PETER DREHER,** Knowlton, 568 Broadway. 966-2625. Through March 7. . . . **HERMANN HESSE,** Donahue/Sosinski, 560 Broadway. 226-1111. Through Feb. 28. . . . **Y. Z. KAMI** and **DAISUKE NAKAYAMA,** Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300. Both shows through March 14. . . . **SARAH LEAHY,** Foster, 62 Crosby St. 966-9024. Through March 7. . . . **ROBERT MOSKOWITZ,** Markey, 55 Vandam St. 627-4446. Through March 21. . . . **REBECCA QUAYTMAN,** Brownstone, 39 Wooster St. 334-3455. Through March 14. . . . **KENNY SCHARF,** Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300. Through March 14. . . . **RUDOLF STEINER,** Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441. Through March 21.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Sotheby's—The house is in the midst of an eighteen-session auction of four thousand objects from the Paris mansion of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, a sale rescheduled from last September. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000. Feb. 19-27.)

Christie's—Feb. 19: A single-owner sale of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, including a Picasso portrait of Dora Maar. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000. . . . **NOTE:** Through March 1, Christie's is exhibiting selections from the Herbig Collection—particularly strong in avant-garde German and American pieces from the nineteen-sixties and -seventies—which, following a world tour, will be auctioned here on June 3.) . . . At **CHRISTIE'S EAST:** Sales of antique and fine jewelry (Feb. 19) and of printed books and manuscripts (Feb. 25). (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

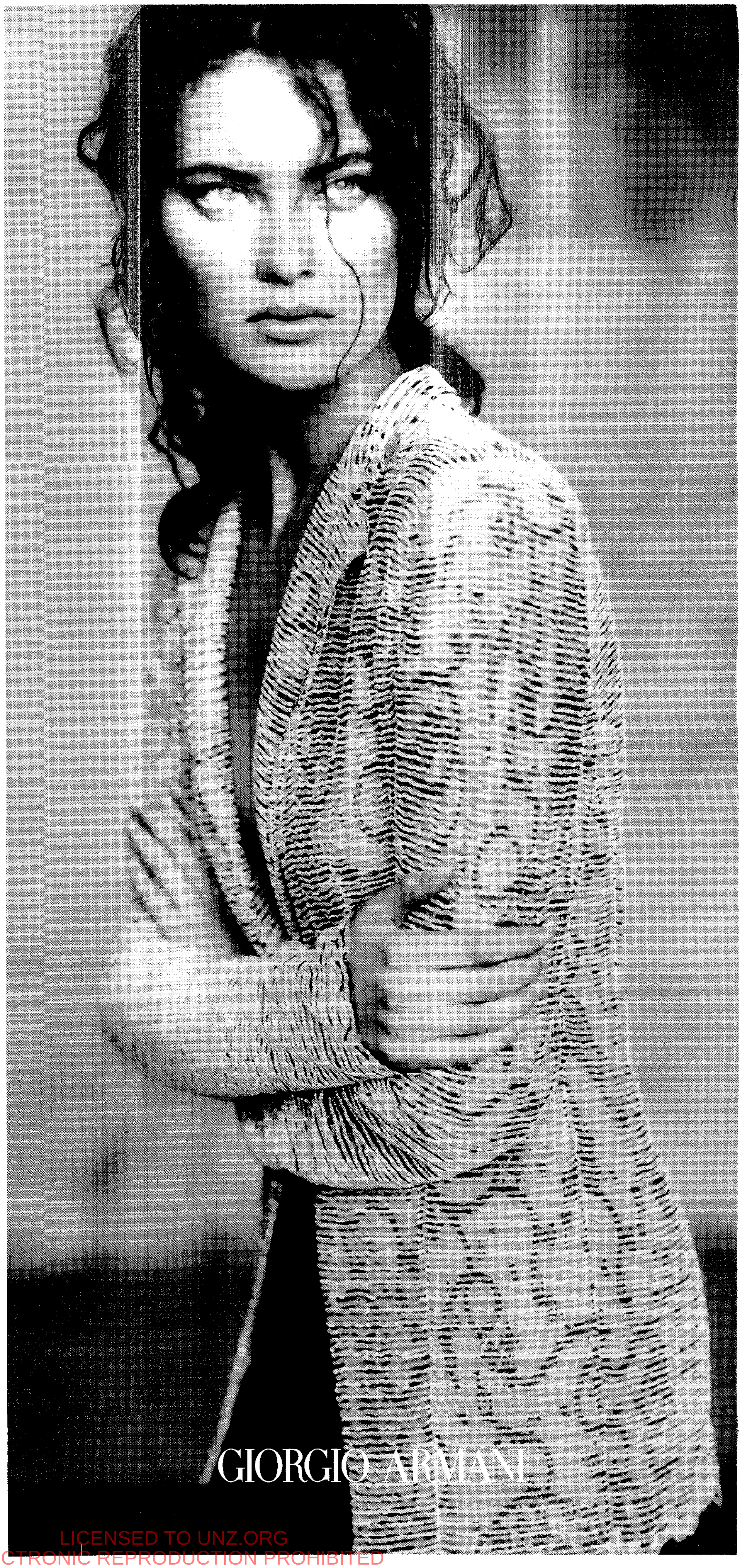
R. M. Smythe—An autograph auction that includes rare items from the twilight of the Kennedy Administration, including assassination-related documents privately prepared for Jacqueline Kennedy; also, a collection of autograph material relating to General George Armstrong Custer. (St. Moritz Hotel, 50 Central Park S. Feb. 26. For information about the sale and viewing, call 943-1880.)

The Art Show—For the tenth year, sixty-four members of the Art Dealers Association of America offer a wide range of work, from Old Masters to the avant-garde. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Feb. 19-23, with a benefit preview on Feb. 18. For information, call 940-8925.)

Coliseum Antiques Show—A bit of everything. (Coliseum, Columbus Circle. Feb. 28-March 1. For information, call 255-0020.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Anton Bruehl (1900-82)—Vintage prints by a master magazine and advertising photographer whose black-and-white and color work filled the pages of the Condé Nast magazines in the thirties and forties. Bruehl's commercial output was strikingly good-looking and fashionable, even if it was sometimes a bit too ripe. But the pleasant surprise here is that his early industrial views (gas tanks, the skylights of Pennsylvania Station) and portraits of children in Mexico were just as strong and even more lucid for



GIORGIO ARMANI

their lack of embellishment. Through March 7. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

ROSE MARASCO—"New England Diary," photographs of items the artist has collected over the years along the rural byways of the Northeast. Some form series, such as six images of the fronts and backs of homemade button cards, or a dozen shots of colorful aprons. Others depict domestic items—a rolling pin, an ironing board—out of doors at the edge of a marsh or of the ocean. The most affecting works recontextualize old photographs: one picture, of a woman named Florence Burrill Jacobs (whose diary the artist also found), is elegantly surrounded by a carpet of umber grape leaves, rhyming with the image of the young woman sitting in a doorway overgrown with grapevines. Through March 7. (Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., between 23rd and 24th Sts. 242-7767.)

DAVID (CHIM) SEYMOUR (1911-56)—Images of children predominate in this affecting selection of prints by the renowned photojournalist. Through March 7. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292.)

RUTH THORNE-THOMSEN / ROBERT FRANK—"Proverbs," a mildly intriguing group of pinhole-camera photographs that illustrate such epigrams as "Today Can't Catch Tomorrow" and "The World Turns as a Ball."/ Rarely seen prints (they were *not* in "The Americans") that are nearly as effective as the artist's famous works. In one, a tottery wooden spiral staircase sits abandoned in a Hollywood back lot; another shows a Chicago man, his shirtback emblazoned with a flying duck, staring at a drugstore façade. Both shows through Feb. 21. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220.)

BURK UZZLE / MICHA BAR-AM—"Daytona Bike Week," a thirty-year look at the tatooed Florida subculture. / A small, powerful selection of social observations and unflinching war reportage by the celebrated Israeli photojournalist. (In conjunction with the retrospective at the International Center of Photography.) Both shows through March 14. (Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

"THE COTTINGLEY FAIRIES AND OTHER APPARITIONS"—The sprites the title alludes to were the creations of two young cousins, Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, who, in 1917, in their West Yorkshire hamlet, produced two photographs, each of a winged being prancing beside a young girl. (The cousins happily confessed to their hoax in 1982.) In addition, the show presents "spirit" photographs from the nineteenth century and works by a great lineup of artists, including Eugène Atget, Jacques Henri Lartigue, James Van Der Zee, Duane Michals, Vik Muniz, and Nancy Burson. Through Feb. 21. (Tonkonow, 601 W. 26th St. 255-8450.)

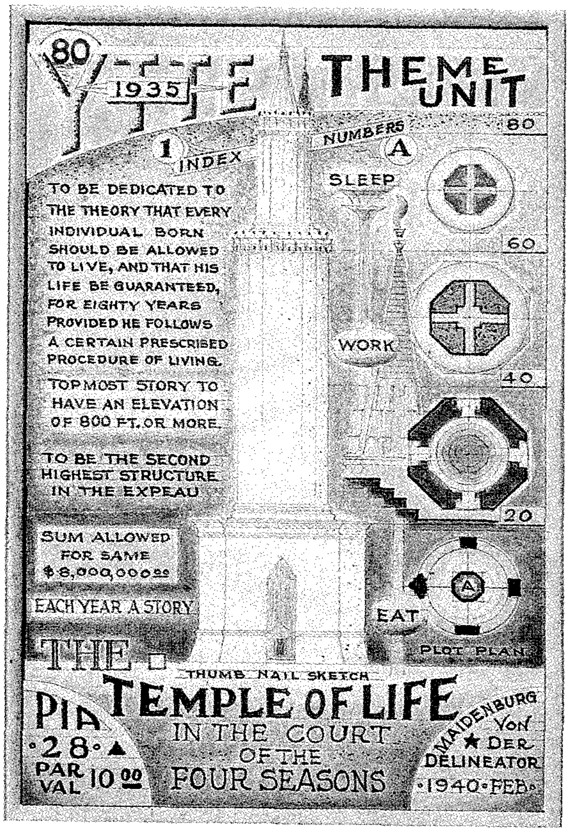
"FLASHBACK: THE FIFTIES"—A pictorial survey of that decade, through the works of such photographers as Roy DeCarava, Robert Frank, Benn Mitchell, and Garry Winogrand. Through March 7. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

"MALE"—A show of ruminations on the masculine in photographs and other mediums, curated by *Village Voice* photography critic and art editor Vince Aletti. Among the artists represented are Wilhelm von Gloeden, Cecil Beaton, Jean Cocteau, Sally Mann, John Dugdale, Rosalind Solomon, Tseng Kwong Chi, and David Wojnarowicz. Through Feb. 22. (Wessel and O'Connor, 242 W. 26th St. 242-8811. Open Sundays.)

"PORTRAITS"—The inaugural exhibition of the Paul Morris gallery features works by Robert Beck, Eve Fowler, Seydou Keïta, Tracey Moffatt, Jack Pierson, Chris Verne, and Andy Warhol. Through Feb. 28. (465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752. Closed Tuesdays.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY—"Nelly: From Athens to New York, the Work of Elli Seraïdari." Through Feb. 22. . . . ¶ "Images from the Machine Age: Selections from the Daniel Cowin Collection." Through Feb. 22. . . . ¶ "Micha Bar-Am: An Israeli Photobiography." (See listing above.) Starts Feb. 27. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN—"Weegee's World: Life, Death and the Human Drama," a two-hundred-picture exhibition that spans the tabloid photographer's career. Through March 8. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)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"A. G. Rizzoli: Architect of Magnificent Visions," at the Museum of American Folk Art.

SHORT LIST—**THOMAS JOSHUA COOPER**, Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. 343-2405. Through March 14. . . . **TONI FRISSELL**, Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223. Through Feb. 21. . . . **PETER GARFIELD**, Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. 929-0500. Through March 7. . . . **JAN GROOVER**, Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through Feb. 21. . . . **LOIS GUARINO**, Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223. Through March 14. . . . **YEVGENY KHALDEI**, Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363. Through Feb. 21. . . . **DOROTHEA LANGE** and **LEWIS HINE**, Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211. Closed Tuesdays; both shows through Feb. 28. . . . **LUIS MALLO**, Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through March 14. . . . **WAYNE F. MILLER**, De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Through March 14. . . . **ROBERTO SCHEZEN**, Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through March 14. . . . **PAUL STRAND**, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 505-5555. Through April 4. . . . **KARL STRUSS**, Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300. Through March 28. . . . **ERNEST WITHERS**, Kasher, 54 North Moore St. 966-3978. Closed Tuesdays, opens at noon; through March 7.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 501-3330; and for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE.** (Feb. 18 and Feb. 26 at 8, and Feb. 21 at 1:30.) . . . **LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN.** (Feb. 19, Feb. 23, and Feb. 28 at 8, and March 3 at 7:30.) . . . **MADAMA BUTTERFLY.** (Feb. 20, Feb. 24, Feb. 27, and March 2, all at 8.) . . . **SAMSON ET DALILA.** (Feb. 21 and Feb. 25 at 8, and Feb. 28 at 1:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—At Avery Fisher Hall, Kurt Masur conducting. Feb. 19-21 at 8 and Feb. 24 at 7:30: Haydn's Symphony No. 101 (the "Clock"), Prokofiev's "Scythian Suite," and, with soprano Dawn Upshaw, Foss's "Time Cycle" and five of Canteloube's "Songs of the Auvergne." . . . ¶ Feb. 26, Feb. 28, and March 3 at 8, and Feb. 27 at 2: Two works by Sibelius—his "Swan of Tuonela" and his Violin Concerto (with Sarah Chang)—plus Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6.

ROYAL CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA—Riccardo Chailly conducts Mahler's "Todtenfeier" and Rossini's Stabat Mater. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 18 at 8.)

CHOIRS OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA—Kent Tritle directs Rachmaninoff's a-cappella Vespers. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. Feb. 19 at 8. 288-2520.)

CHANTICLEER—The men's choir performs a program of chant, plus Lou Harrison's "Chant Mass." (Temple of Dendur, Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 20 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC—A weekend of Hungarian folk music and classical pieces it inspired. Feb. 20-21 at 8: Robert Spano conducts Brahms's Hungarian Dances No. 1, No. 3, and No. 10; Ligeti's Violin Concerto (featuring Laura Park); Bartók's "Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta"; and Kodály's "Háry János Suite." The Ökrös Folk Music Ensemble of Hungary, with violinist Sándor Fodor and cimbalom player Kálmán Balogh, adds authenticity to the proceedings. . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 3: A talk-and-play afternoon of Hungarian music. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100.)

ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S—Per Brevig conducts a program that includes incidental music to Ibsen's "Peer Gynt" by two Norwegian composers: Grieg and Harald Saeverud. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 21 at 7.)

MET ORCHESTRA—James Levine leads Webern's orchestration of the Ricercar from Bach's "A Musical Offering," Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (with Maxim Vengerov), Ligeti's "Atmosphères," and Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique." (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 22 at 3.)

WESTMINSTER CHOIR—Performing twentieth-century American choral works. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. Feb. 22 at 3. For information about tickets, call 875-5030.)

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—Leon Botstein leads two works born of anti-Fascist sentiments: "Jewish Chronicle" (a collaborative work with movements by Paul Dessau, Hans Werner Henze, Boris Blacher, Karl Amadeus Hartmann, and Rudolf Wagner-Regény) and "Deutsche Sinfonie" (from 1939, by Hanns Eisler, with a text by Brecht). (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 25 at 8.)

SIBELIUS ACADEMY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—A week-long master class in conducting, led by the Finnish pedagogue Jorma Panula, culminates in a concert that includes Sibelius's Symphonies No. 5 and No. 7, as well as Stravinsky's "Dumbarton Oaks" Concerto. Among the conductors are Esa-Pekka Salonen (a Panula protégé) and several of the seminar participants. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 25 at 8.)

BERLIN SYMPHONY—Joseph Silverstein conducts an all-Beethoven program that comprises the "Egmont" Overture, the Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Derek Han), and the Symphony No. 5. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Feb. 27 at 8.)

VIENNA PHILHARMONIC—At Carnegie Hall, Riccardo Muti conducting. Feb. 27 at 8: An all-Mozart program—the Overture to "Le Nozze di Figaro," the ballet music for "Idomeneo," the D-Major Divertimento (K. 136), and the Symphony No. 39. . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 8: Beethoven's F-Minor String Quartet (Op. 95), in Mahler's symphonic arrangement, plus Mahler's Symphony No. 4 (with soprano Ruth Ziesak). . . . ¶ March 1 at 2: Hindemith's Symphony in E-Flat Major and Brahms's Symphony No. 2.

JUPITER SYMPHONY—Methodists revere the English clergyman John Wesley as their founder. He was also a music lover (though he believed that church music must have words attached), and he passed his appreciation along to two nephews, the brothers Charles Wesley (1757-1834) and Samuel Wesley (1766-1837). Charles was a child-prodigy harpsichordist, and his precocity threatened to overshadow his younger brother's talent until Samuel proved himself by writing an oratorio at the age of eight. Both men attained musical distinction, though Charles did not live up to his early promise. Samuel flourished, but the family viewed him as something of a black sheep owing to his flirtations with the Roman church, his involvement with Freemasonry, his divorce, and his subsequent unblessed union with his maid (who bore him an illegitimate son—Samuel Sebastian Wesley, yet another composer). In this concert, Jens Nygaard leads works by both brothers—Samuel's Symphony No. 5 and Charles's Keyboard Concerto No. 4 (with pianist Richard Bishop)—as well as Bartók's "Rumanian Folk Dances" and Lalo's "Symphonie Espagnole" (featuring violinist Arturo Delmoni). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. March 2 at 2 and 7 and March 3 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

"SONIDOS DE LAS AMÉRICAS"—Opening concerts of the annual exploration of the music of our hemisphere, which this year focusses on Argentinian music. March 2 at 8: The American Composers Orchestra Chamber Players offer works by Ricardo Dal Farra, Alicia Terzian, and José Halac, in addition to performing Martin Matalon's score to accompany a screening of the 1928 Buñuel-Dali film "Un Chien Andalou." (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793.) . . . ¶ March 3 at 2: Choral music by Carlos Guastavino. (Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture, 450 Grand Concourse, at W. 149th St., the Bronx. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 3 at 8: Music for (mostly) percussion, by Davidovsky, Kagel, Geraldo Dirié, Mariano Etkin, Dante Grela, and Alejandro Iglesias-Rossi, played by the American Composers Orchestra Chamber Players. (Weill Recital Hall.) . . . **NOTE:** The festival continues through March 8.

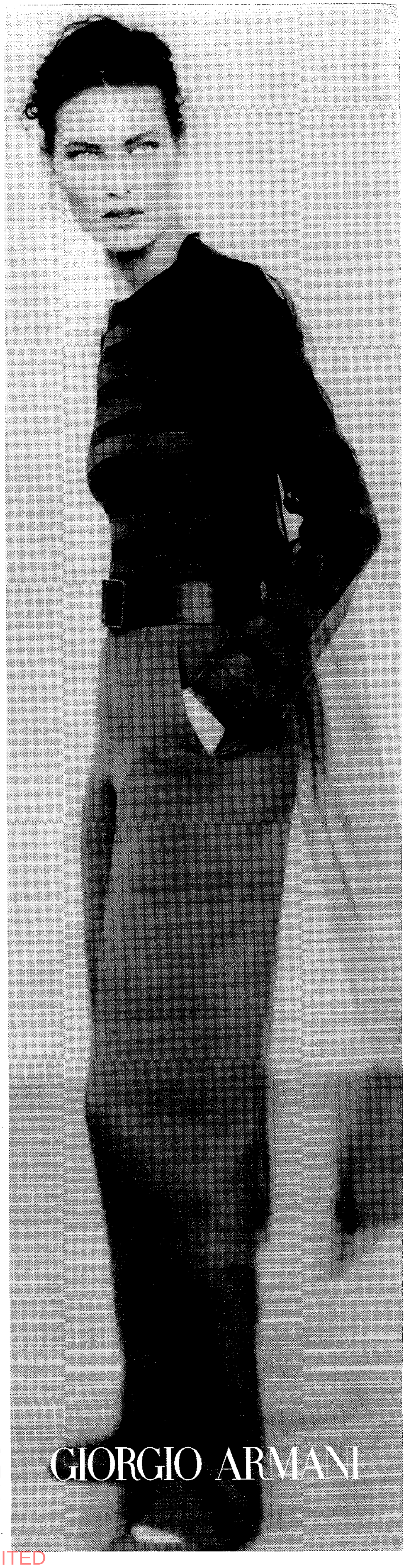
RECITALS

JEAN-PIERRE RAMPAL—The flutist, with colleagues, offers pieces by Telemann, Bach, and others. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 18 at 7:30.)

LES TALENS LYRIQUES—The early-music group performs cantatas and instrumental pieces that Handel wrote during his journeyman years in Rome. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 18 at 8.)

BARGEMUSIC—Feb. 19 at 7:30 and Feb. 22 at 4: Timothy Eddy plays Bach's Unaccompanied Cello Suite No. 3; colleagues join him for Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time." . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 7:30 and March 1 at 4: Pianist Anne-Marie McDermott performs Bach's A-Minor "English" Suite; violinist Ani Kavafian and French hornist Robert Routch complete the ensemble for horn trios by Brahms and Daniel Schnyder. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

NEW YORK FESTIVAL OF SONG—Sopranos Amy Burton and Dana Hanchard, tenor William Burden, bass-baritone Arthur Woodley, and



pianists Michael Barrett and Steven Blier perform rarely heard musical-theatre works by Albéniz (his 1896 zarzuela, "Pepita Jiménez," offered here with its original English text), Noel Coward ("Conversation Piece," from 1934), and Weill ("Der Kuhhandel," from 1934), as well as excerpts from the 1903 musical "In Dahomey" (written collaboratively by a group of African-American composers). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Feb. 19 at 8.)

Nathan Gunn—Baritone, with pianist John Wustman, performing Schubert's "Die Schöne Müllerin." (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Feb. 20 at 8: Musicians affiliated with Chamber Music Society Two, the organization's apprentice program, perform Mozart's D-Major Flute Quartet, Barber's "Dover Beach," Crumb's "An Idyll for the Misbegotten," and Brahms's Clarinet Quintet. . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 5 and Feb. 24 at 7:30: Telemann's D-Major Flute Quartet, Schickele's Suite from "The Rivals," and Mendelssohn's C-Minor Piano Trio. (Alice Tully Hall.)

Much Mahler—On Feb. 21, the New York Chamber Ensemble, conducted by Stephen Rogers Radcliffe, performs a full afternoon of music by Mahler, in chamber-scaled orchestrations. At 1: "Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen," with baritone Elem Ely. . . . ¶ At 1:30: Songs from "Des Knaben Wunderhorn," with mezzo-soprano Marguerite Krull. . . . ¶ At 2: The "Rückert-Lieder," with contralto Ellen Rabiner. . . . ¶ At 2:30: The Symphony No. 4, with soprano Theresa Cincione. . . . ¶ At 4: "Das Lied von der Erde," with mezzo-soprano Jane Dutton and tenor Marc Deaton. (Alice Tully Hall.)

Musique de Salon—A round-table discussion (at 4) and a concert (at 7) on the theme of chamber music and the Parisian literary scene at the turn of the century. The recital comprises Ravel's "Chansons Madécasses," Debussy's "Images Oubliées," and Mendelssohn's C-Minor Piano Trio. (Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 21.)

Continuum—The modern-music group performs five works by the Ukrainian-American composer Virko Baley. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 21 at 8.)

Bradley Brookshire—The harpsichordist continues his survey of Bach's solo-keyboard works by performing the Toccatas and the Partitas in E Minor, C-Minor, and D Major. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 22 at 2.)

Penderecki String Quartet—The foursome performs quartets by Beethoven (in F Major, Op. 135) and Alexander Lason, as well as Schumann's Piano Quintet (with pianist Nina Sapiejewska). (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Feb. 22 at 3.)

Richard Stone—Lutenist, performing sonatas by the Dresden composer Sylvius Leopold Weiss, an exact contemporary of Bach's. (St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway at Fulton St. Feb. 23 at noon. Admission by contribution. . . . ¶ Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Feb. 26 at 8. For information about tickets call 924-0077.)

Emma Kirkby and Lars Ulrik Mortensen—The soprano and the harpsichordist offer works by Handel (including two cantatas and the E-Major Harpsichord Suite) and by his contemporaries Boyce and Arne, among others. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 23 at 7:30.)

Dmitri Hvorostovsky—The baritone's program includes arias by Handel, Gluck, and Mozart, as well as Sviridov's "Petersburg—A Vocal Poem." Pianist Mikhail Arkadiev assists. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 24 at 7:30.)

Da Capo Chamber Players—Performing works by Louise Talma, Judith Shatin, and Su Lian Tan, as well as Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time." (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Feb. 24 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

Tokyo String Quartet—Performing Mozart's D-Minor Quartet (K. 421), Webern's Five Movements (Op. 5), and Tchaikovsky's Quartet No. 3. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 25 at 8.)

Four Nations Ensemble—The period-instrument group offers a program that includes Beethoven's Piano Trio in E-Flat Major (Op. 1, No. 1) and keyboard works by Byrd and Scarlatti. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 25 at 8.)

Ursula Oppens—The pianist performs Beethoven's Sonatas in A Major (Op. 2, No. 2), C-Sharp Minor (Op. 27, No. 2), F Major (Op. 10, No. 2), and F Minor (Op. 57), in addition to Babbitt's "Three Compositions for Piano" and Bolcom's "Graceful Ghost Rag" and "Dead Moth Tango." (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 26 at 8.)

Oxana Yablonskaya—The pianist's recital includes Beethoven's Sonata in D Minor (Op. 31, No. 2), Rachmaninoff's "Variations on a Theme of Corelli," and several Liszt transcriptions of Schubert songs. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Feb. 26 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Le Quatuor—This madcap string quartet of former street musicians from Paris offers a program in which classical music meets performance art. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Feb. 26-28 at 8.)

New Juilliard Ensemble—The contemporary-music group offers works from the nineties, by Alexander Goehr, Gregory Boduch, Ruben Seroussi, Dmitri Yanov Yanovsky, and Francis Schwartz. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 27 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Petersen String Quartet—Performing quartets by Haydn (in D Major, Op. 1, No. 3), Schulhoff (his First), and Beethoven (in A Minor, Op. 132). (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 27 at 8.)

Beaux Arts Trio—The ensemble offers piano trios by Haydn, Schumann (his Second), and Shostakovich (his Second). (Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 27-28 at 8.)

Keller String Quartet—This foursome was founded in 1986, when its members were students at the Franz Liszt Conservatory, in Budapest; it broke into the international spotlight four years later by winning the prestigious Evian International String Quartet Competition and, a month later, the Second Borcioni International Competition. The group has gone on to win acclaim for its recordings, including top French and German awards last year for Kurtág's "Music for String Instruments" (on ECM New Series). Its New York recital début is a double-header, in two locales. March 1 at 11 A.M.: Bach's "The Art of Fugue" and Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" Quartet. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.) . . . ¶ March 1 at 2: Bach's "The Art of Fugue," Kurtág's "Microlude," and Beethoven's Quartet in A Minor (Op. 132). (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Juliane Banse—Soprano, performing songs by Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. (Alice Tully Hall. March 1 at 2.)

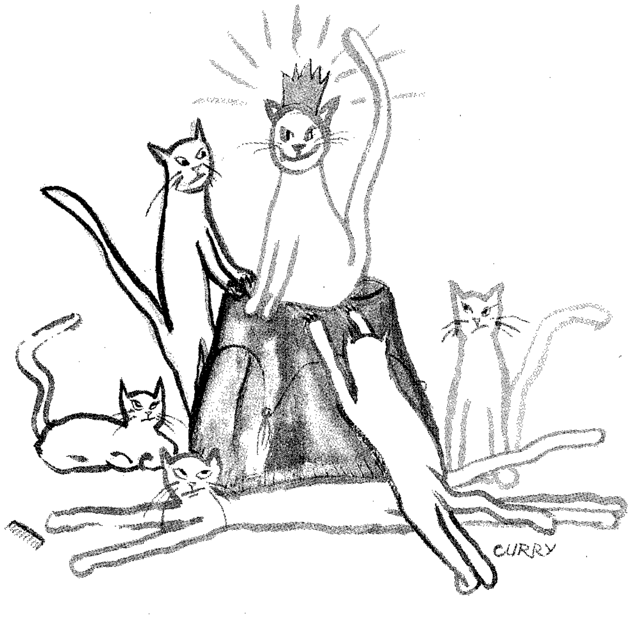
Manuel Barrueco—Guitarist, playing pieces by Bach, Sor, Leo Brouwer, and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 1 at 3.)

Mendelssohn String Quartet—Charles Neidich joins the foursome for clarinet quintets by Mozart, Weber, and Brahms. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 1 at 7.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

See Puff Play—Siamese, Abyssinians, Turkish Angoras, and other favorites compete for top-cat honors in the fourteenth annual International Cat Show. Eight hundred felines will be on exhibit, among them such new breeds as the LaPerm, or the bad-hair-day breed; the Munchkin, the dachshund of the cat world; and the Skookum, a mix of the aforementioned two. (Madison Square Garden. Feb. 28-March 1. For more information, call 718-275-6098.)

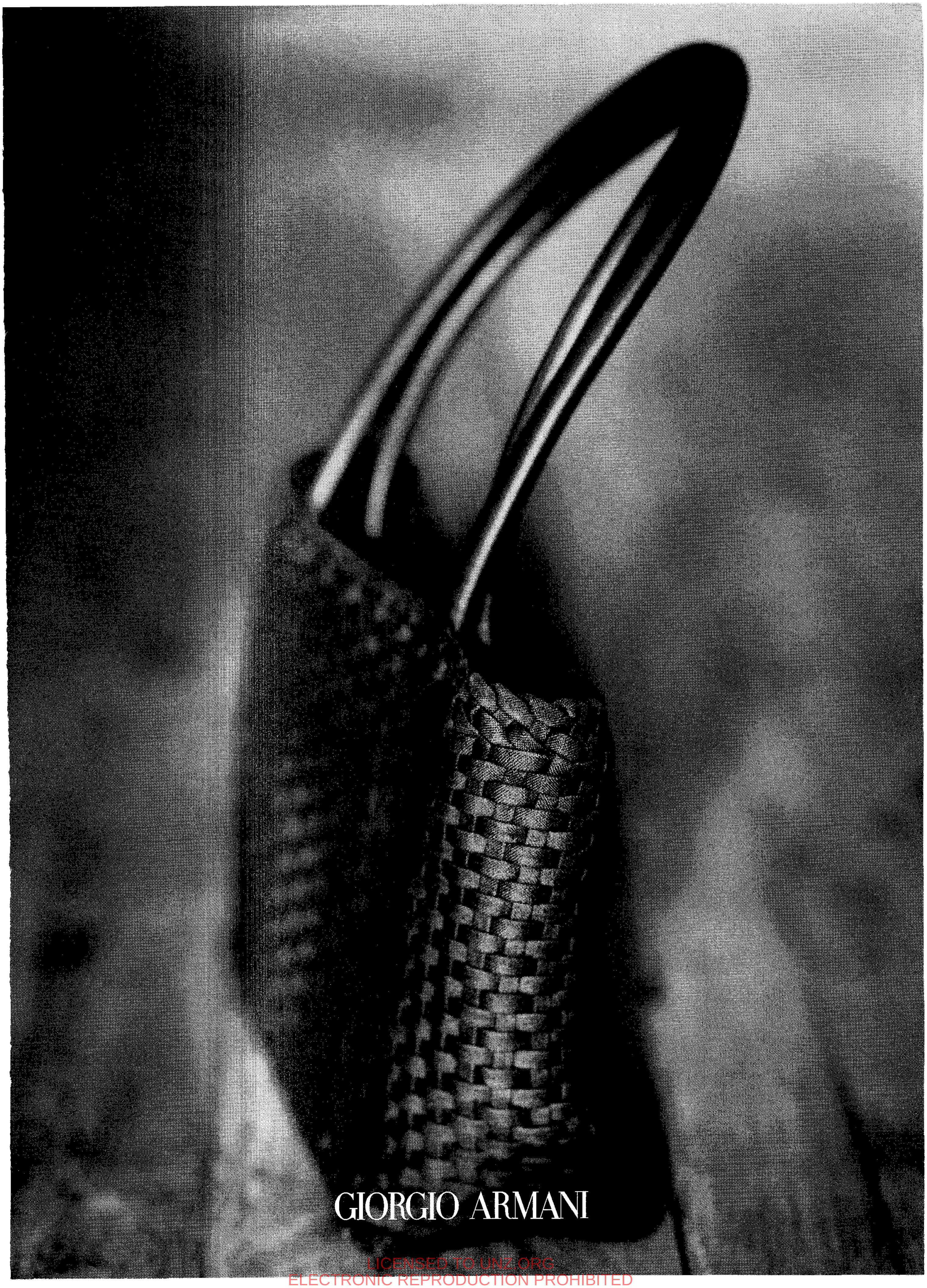
Readings—Feb. 20 at 8: By Anne Fadiman, from "The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down," her account of a young Hmong refugee's struggle with epilepsy; and by Kelvin Christopher James, from his novel "The Sorcerer's Dance." (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 6:30: By Grace Paley, from her prose and poetry. (Biblio's, 317 Church St. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 6:30: By Cristina Rathbone, from her book about life in a New York City high school, "On the Outside Looking In." (Rizzoli, 454 West Broadway. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 7: By the Irish novelist Edna O'Brien, from recent work. (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Sq. S., at Macdougal St. 998-8816.)



The International Cat Show, at Madison Square Garden.

Talks—Feb. 18 at 6: United States Public Health Service historian John Parascandola discusses the campaign in the thirties and forties to educate the public about syphilis and screens excerpts from related films produced by the service during that period. (New York Academy of Medicine, Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. For more information, call 822-7314.) . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 6:30: *Salmagundi* editor Robert Boyers interviews novelist Maureen Howard ("A Lover's Almanac"). (PEN America Center, 568 Broadway, at Prince St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 6: *Hudson Review* editor Paula Deitz, essayist Joseph Epstein, poet Louis Simpson, and Beaver College English professor Susan Balée consider the contemporary personal essay. (Jurow Hall, New York University, 100 Washington Sq. E. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 6: Silvano Paternostro, a fellow at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, and Ned Sublette, co-founder of Qbadisc records, moderate a discussion about Cuban music with Cuban pop stars Carlos Varela and David Calzado and musicologist Caridad Diez. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5488.) . . . ¶ March 1 at noon: *New Yorker* cartoonist Roz Chast talks about her work. (Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway. 718-789-2493.)

CHRIS CURRY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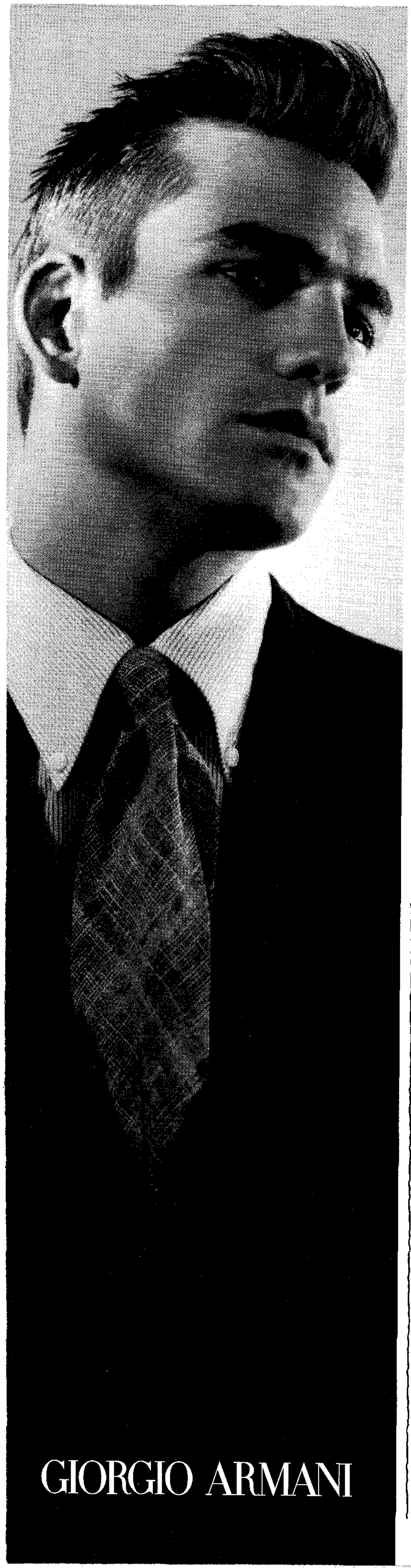

THE MOVIES

OPENINGS

An Alan Smithee Film—Burn, Hollywood, Burn—A satire of big-budget Hollywood films, written by Joe Eszterhas and directed by the eponymous Alan Smithee. Opening Feb. 27.

The Break—Stephen Rea plays an I.R.A. member who, having escaped prison, tries to build a new life in New York, in a drama directed by Robert Dornhelm. Opening Feb. 20. (Quad Cinema.)

Caught Up—A drama written and directed by Darin Scott, involving a young man with a dream (Bokeem Woodbine), a beautiful woman (Cynda Williams), and a corpse. Opening Feb. 27.

Comrades, Almost a Love Story—A romance from the Hong Kong director Peter Chan, centering on two lovers who travel from mainland China to New York City. In Mandarin, Cantonese, and English. Opening Feb. 20. (Cinema Village.)

Dangerous Beauty—The life of the sixteenth-century Venetian courtesan Veronica Franco (Catherine McCormack) is the basis for this drama directed by Marshall Herskovitz. With Rufus Sewell, Jacqueline Bisset, and Oliver Platt. Opening Feb. 20.

Dark City—Rufus Sewell, Kiefer Sutherland, Jennifer Connelly, and William Hurt star in a futuristic science-fiction thriller directed by Alex Proyas. Opening Feb. 27.

I Love You . . . Don't Touch Me—A romantic comedy written and directed by Julie Davis. Opening Feb. 20. (Art Greenwich Twin and First & 62nd Cinemas.)

Kissing a Fool—A young man (David Schwimmer) sends his best friend (Jason Lee) to test the faithfulness of his fiancée (Mili Avital), in a comedy directed by Doug Ellin. Opening Feb. 27.

Krippendorf's Tribe—A comedy in which a grant-seeking anthropologist (Richard Dreyfuss) invents an undiscovered New Guinea tribe. Directed by Todd Holland. Opening Feb. 27.

Leather Jacket Love Story—An eighteen-year-old Valley boy and a thirty-year-old Los Angeles biker are the main characters in a gay romance directed by David DeCoteau. Opening Feb. 20. (Quad Cinema.)

Love Walked In—Denis Leary, Aitana Sanchez Gijon, Michael Badalucco, and Terence Stamp star in a film noir of blackmail and double crosses. Directed by Juan J. Campanella. Opening Feb. 20.

Mrs. Dalloway—Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening Feb. 20.

Moon Over Broadway—D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus's backstage documentary about the comedy "Moon Over Buffalo," which opened on Broadway in October, 1995, and starred Carol Burnett and Philip Bosco. Feb. 18-March 3. (Film Forum.)

Palmetto—Woody Harrelson plays a recently released prisoner, in a crime drama that also stars Elisabeth Shue, Gina Gershon, Chlöe Sevigny, and Michael Rapaport. Directed by Volker Schlöndorff. Opening Feb. 20. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Real Blonde—Tom DiCillo wrote and directed this multi-character story set in Manhattan's entertainment and film worlds. With Matthew Modine, Catherine Keener, Daryl Hannah, Maxwell Caulfield, and Elizabeth Berkley. Opening Feb. 27.

Senseless—An ambitious student (Marlon Wayans) takes on one job too many, in a comedy directed by Penelope Spheeris. Opening Feb. 20. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Gotham Cinema, Orpheum VII, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

Shampoo Horns—Manuel Toledano's look at the night life of Manhattan club kids, and at the murder that one of them committed. Opening Feb. 27. (Quad Cinema.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

The Apostle—Produced, written, and directed by its star, Robert Duvall, this film addresses without condescension or glibness a subject—religious conviction—that Hollywood generally caricatures. Duvall plays Sonny, a charismatic Pentecostal preacher on the run from the police. Duvall's performance is so passionate, so energized, that it's almost eerie: is Sonny acting him or is he acting Sonny? The supporting players include Farrah Fawcett, John Beasley, June Carter Cash, Miranda Richardson, and Billy Bob Thornton.—*Daphne Merkin* (2/2/98) (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

As Good as It Gets—A romantic comedy directed and co-written (with Mark Andrus) by James L. Brooks, in which an improbable trio overcomes a heap of troubles and finds collective happiness, sitcom style. Jack Nicholson stars as a romance novelist with a seriously alienating manner, Helen Hunt is a waitress with a young son who has a life-threatening disease, and Greg Kinnear is a gay painter with a sweet smile and no visible erotic attachments. You keep expecting to hear a laugh track.—*D.M.* (1/5/98) (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Battle of Algiers (1965)—An epic in the form of a "created documentary": it's a reconstruction of the events of 1954 to 1957 in the guerrilla war waged by the National Liberation Front against the French authorities. The director, Gillo Pontecorvo, and his co-writer, Franco Solinas, are almost too clever. The revolutionaries forming their pyramid of cells don't need to express revolutionary consciousness, because the hyper-intelligent French colonel (Jean Martin) is given such a full counter-revolutionary consciousness that he says it all for them. He even expresses the knowledge that history is on the side of the oppressed colonial peoples, who will win; he himself is merely part of a holding action, preserving imperialism a little longer but bound to fail. The movie hardly seems to be "saying" anything, yet the historical-determinist message seeps right into your bones. You may even accept the movie's implicit message that the N.L.F.'s violent methods are the only way to freedom. Pontecorvo's inflammatory passion works directly on your feelings. He's the most dangerous kind of Marxist, a Marxist poet. In French and Arabic.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 27 and March 3.)

The Boxer—Daniel Day-Lewis plays a former I.R.A. recruit who returns to Belfast after fourteen years in prison and rebuilds a community boxing club in the hope of uniting Protestants and Catholics; along the way he takes up with a youthful flame (Emily Watson) now married to his best friend. Jim Sheridan's film is stronger on atmosphere than on specifics, but the quiet intensity of Day-Lewis's performance gives it genuine force.—*D.M.* (1/19/98) (Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Waverly.)

Deconstructing Harry—Woody Allen casts himself as a famous Jewish novelist who ridicules and cheats on women and then appropriates their life stories for his fiction. As a director, Allen seems to be shooting for a new style of ruthless honesty: the film's tone is almost abusively dark. But clear away the pseudo-profound talk about the immorality of genius and all you're left with is a bunch of celebrity cameos and outdated gags.—*Sarah Kerr* (Cinema 3rd Avenue, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, and 19th Street East 6.)

EYES OF LAURA MARS (1978)—This New York-set thriller operates on mood and atmosphere and moves so fast, with such delicate changes of rhythm, that its excitement has a subterranean sexiness. Directed by Irvin Kershner, it has a few shocking fast cuts, but it also has scabrous elegance and a surprising amount of humor. Faye Dunaway, with long, thick, dark-red hair, is Laura Mars, a celebrity fashion photographer who specializes in the chic and pungency of sadism. With Dunaway constantly kneeling or sprawling to take photographs, her legs, especially her thighs, are far more important to her performance than her eyes; her flesh gives off heat. Tommy Lee Jones is the police lieutenant who represents old-fashioned morality, and when the neurotically vulnerable Laura, who has become telepathic about violence, falls in love with him, they're a very creepy pair.—*P. K.* (A Different Light Bookstore; Feb. 22.)

FOUR DAYS IN SEPTEMBER—In 1969, a group of young Brazilian terrorists kidnapped the American ambassador, demanding the release of imprisoned colleagues. Bruno Barreto's surprisingly placid movie remains faithful to the

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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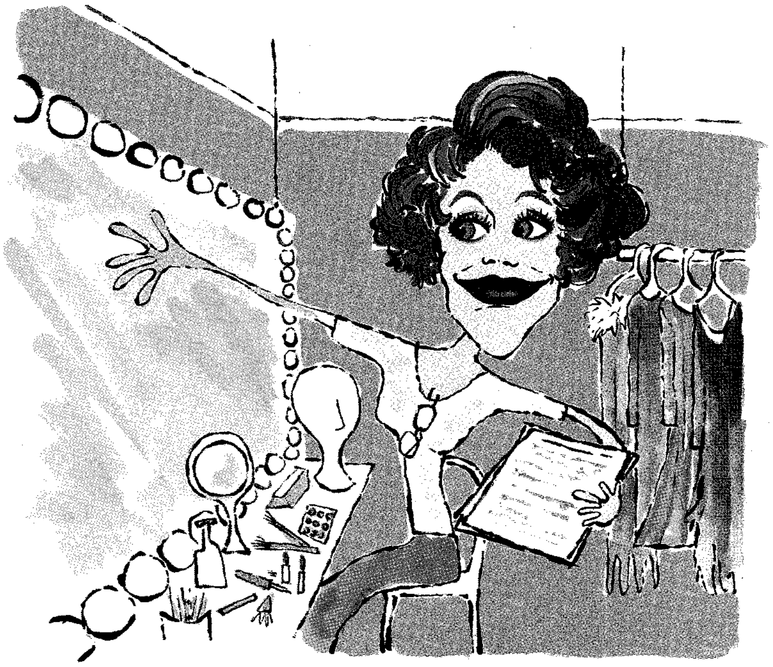
(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St.
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at Broadway.
BEEKMAN, Second Ave. at 66th St.
CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd St.
CHELSEA WEST, 333 W. 23rd St.
CINEMA I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th St.
CORONET CINEMAS, Third Ave. at 59th St.
CRITERION CENTER, Broadway at 44th St.
EAST 85TH STREET, First Ave. at 85th St.
EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84TH STREET SIXPLEX, Broadway at 84th St.
86TH STREET EAST TWIN, Third Ave. at 86th St.
EMBASSY 1, 2, AND 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th St.
FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd St.
GOTHAM CINEMA, Third Ave. at 58th St.
GUILD, 33 W. 50th St.
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, Broadway at 63rd St.
LINCOLN SQUARE, Broadway at 68th St.
METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, Broadway at 99th St.
MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th St.
NEW YORK TWIN, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19TH STREET EAST 6, Broadway at 19th St.
OLYMPIA I AND II, Broadway at 107th St.
ORPHEUM VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
PARIS, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th St.
QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th St.
REGENCY, Broadway at 67th St.
THE SCREENING ROOM, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd St.
64TH AND 2ND, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72ND STREET EAST, Third Ave. at 71st St.
STATE, Broadway at 45th St.
SUTTON 1 AND 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th St.
VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, Second Ave. at 12th St.
VILLAGE THEATRE VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
WAVERLY 1 AND 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th St.

GIORGIO ARMANI



At Film Forum, Carol Burnett in "Moon Over Broadway."

ROBERT MELEE

facts, but this fidelity brings problems. When a dreamy Marxist utters a line as corny as "The time is ripe for revolution," is that a period detail or a flaw in the script? Barreto's pacing, right up to the mild climax, is more assured than his grasp of character. The problem is that everyone seems to engage not only his interest but also his sympathy: Fernando (Pedro Cardoso), the kidnapper on whose memoir the movie was based, is nagged by doubt, and even the secret-service agent who specializes in torture is unable to sleep at night. At the time, Brazil was a military state plagued by subversion—so where are the hard men? The best reason to see the picture is Alan Arkin, who plays the ambassador; this role, too, is softly written, but Arkin redeems it with a clipped and dignified rigor.—*Anthony Lane* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Gingerbread Man—Directed by Robert Altman, from an original story by John Grisham, this noirish thriller shrouds its conventional plot with some wonderful Altmanesque ambience. Set in Savannah, it features Kenneth Branagh as a savvy, divorced attorney who picks up the wrong woman (Embeth Davidtz) one rainy night and is so taken by her apparent vulnerability that he sets about destroying his own life in order to protect hers. Altman's celebrated skill at allowing his actors room gives the picture a loopy, uncontrived flow that is rare for this genre. With Robert Duvall and Robert Downey, Jr.—*D.M.* (2/2/98) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Good Will Hunting—Matt Damon plays a belligerent working-class genius from South Boston who's been abused in foster homes and is now being given a chance to triumph over his past; Robin Williams is the maverick shrink who helps him understand his demons, and Minnie Driver is the unsnobbish Harvard girlfriend who tries to heal him with acceptance. If it sounds treacly, it's not, thanks to a honed script (co-written by Damon and Ben Affleck, who plays Damon's best pal), subtle performances, and surprisingly warm direction by Gus Van Sant.—*D.M.* (1/19/98) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea West, East 85th Street, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, and State.)

Great Expectations—Don't have any. This update has to be one of the most ludicrously dumbed-down versions of a classic to date. But it does have a hip, hybrid soundtrack, and, as directed by Alfonso Cuarón ("A Little Princess"), it's so visually stunning that it's almost gripping in its incoherence. With Ethan Hawke, Gwyneth Paltrow, Anne Bancroft (two parts Melina Mercouri, one part Carol Channing), and Robert De Niro.—*D.M.* (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Ziegfeld.)

Kundun—Martin Scorsese's examination of the early life of the Dalai Lama. The film is far too long, and viewers may be frustrated by its frequently shifting tone; yet, in a way, a shifting tone is just the right treatment for a religion that emphasizes serene detachment over emotion. And, visually, this may be the director's richest feast since "Raging Bull."—*S.K.* (Cinema II, Guild, and Village East Cinemas.)

Live Flesh—Half an hour into Pedro Almodóvar's new film and you're already up to your chin in blood and lust. The farce is played, as usual, with impassioned gravity, yet is somehow bereft of the high spirits that used to grace the director's films. With Liberto Rabal, Francesca Neri, and Javier Bardem. In Spanish.—*A.L.* (1/26/98) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Mrs. Dalloway—With Marleen Gorris ("Antonia's Line") as director, Eileen Atkins as screenwriter, and Vanessa Redgrave in the title role, the near-impossible is achieved: Virginia Woolf's lyrical evocation of life-as-flux is safely transferred to a visual medium. The first ten minutes seem pell-mell, as though Gorris and Atkins were trying to capture, from every angle, the scattered perspectives from which the snobbish, fragile Clarissa Dalloway views the world on a perfect June day in 1923, on the eve of one of her famous parties. But soon enough everything clicks, helped by an evocative soundtrack, well-edited flashbacks, and an adroit substitution of voice-over for the novel's interior monologues. Woolf's musical language is remarkably preserved, and the performances—by John Standing, Margaret Tyzack, Amelia Bullmore, and Rupert Graves, among others—are a triumph of ensemble acting.—*D.M.* (2/16/98) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; starting Feb. 20.)

Nil by Mouth—Gary Oldman has started to coast through his acting roles, but writing and directing (this is his début feature) bring out the best in him. The story, set in South London, could not be simpler: Ray (Ray Winstone) is sliding into a swamp of drink and drugs, becoming a danger to his wife (Kathy Burke), to her dull brother (Charlie Creed-Miles), and to the rest of the clan. The nervous camera follows them all on a downward spiral; the brother's heroin addiction and Ray's bestial spasms of violence are hard to watch, but the film hangs around in your brain. Even the foul rush of the dialogue feels charged with aggression and wit. Oldman, who grew up in a world like this, is hell-bent on showing us what he knows. Burke and Winstone give it everything they've got, and it's a formidable sight.—*A.L.* (2/9/98) (Angelika Film Center.)

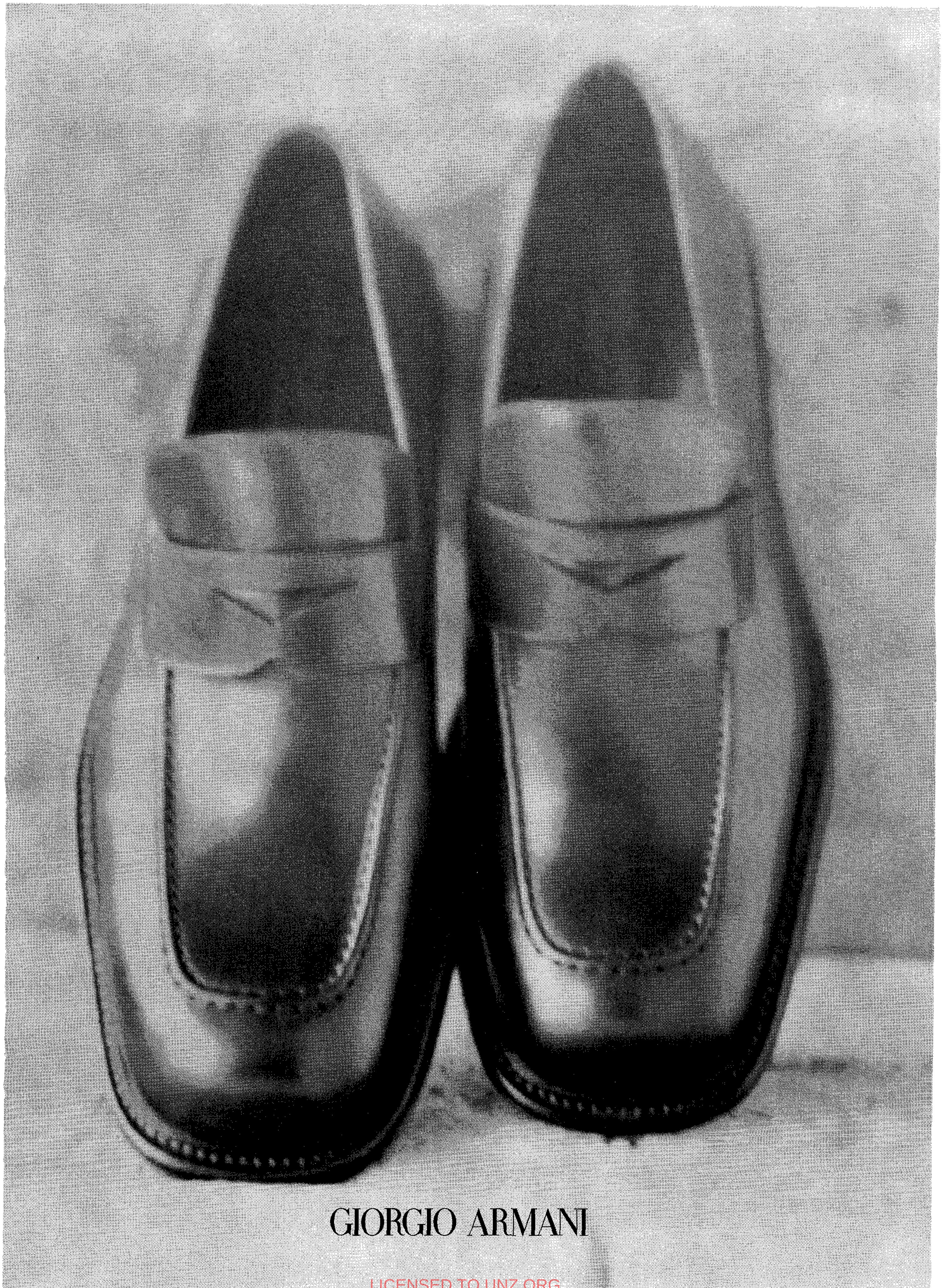
Promise (1986)—James Garner attempts to pull off a huge family real-estate deal while wondering whether he should be acting as his brother's keeper; James Woods is his brother, a schizophrenic who feels as if electric wires are running through his brain. This made-for-TV movie, written by Richard Friedenberg and directed by Glenn Jordan, is the pinnacle of its clinical-psychology genre, dramatically, emotionally, and in its scrupulous unwillingness to let any character off the hook. Woods is brilliant as a man cursed with obsessive behavior (such as falling for everything he sees on television direct-order ads). His character is conscious of his illness and of its effects on other people; the actor lets the audience see beyond this man's funky surface and into his afflicted soul.—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of Television and Radio; starting March 1.)

The Replacement Killers—In his American début, the Hong Kong action star Chow Yun-Fat plays a hit man assigned to kill a little boy. He's reluctant to harm a child, so, with the help of a tough-with-a-heart-of-gold faker of passports (Mira Sorvino), he goes on the lam. Chow is one of the most photogenic men on earth, but, removed from the Hong Kong setting, all the choreographed murder feels dull, poorly paced, and, come to think of it, pretty demented. Antoine Fuqua directed.—*S.K.* (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Titanic—At well over three hours, James Cameron's grand new picture has plenty of romance to get through before it breaks the vessel in half. Leonardo DiCaprio plays the freewheeling Jack, who wins a steerage ticket and finds himself falling for the wealthy Rose (Kate Winslet), to the disapproval of her mother (Frances Fisher) and her brute of a fiancé (Billy Zane). The social animus of the story, like its imaginative majesty, is Dickensian; this all feels like two hundred million dollars well spent.—*A.L.* (12/15/97) (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Wag the Dog—Barry Levinson's comedy about the politics of spin control, from a screenplay by David Mamet and Hilary Henkin. The premise involves a Presidential incumbent caught in a sex scandal less than two weeks before Election Day. Robert De Niro plays a Machiavellian spinmeister who devises a fake war and hires a Hollywood producer (Dustin Hoffman) to orchestrate it. The movie is very clever, but its tone of gleeful sendup never takes you beyond what you already know.—*D.M.* (1/5/98) (Cinema I, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Wedding Singer—A0 romantic comedy in which everything twinkles, from the credits to Adam Sandler's eyes. Sandler is Robbie Hart, who was once the lead singer of a high-school rock group and six years later, circa 1985, has risen only as far as playing master of ceremonies at Connecticut weddings. He's a sweetheart of a guy until his own fiancée (Angela Featherstone) fails to show up at their wedding; at his next gig he has a psychotic fit and serenades the newlyweds with "Love Stinks." Drew Barrymore comes to the rescue as a waitress who's worked receptions with Robbie and enlists his help in planning her wedding, to a DeLorean-driving junk-bond


GIORGIO ARMANI

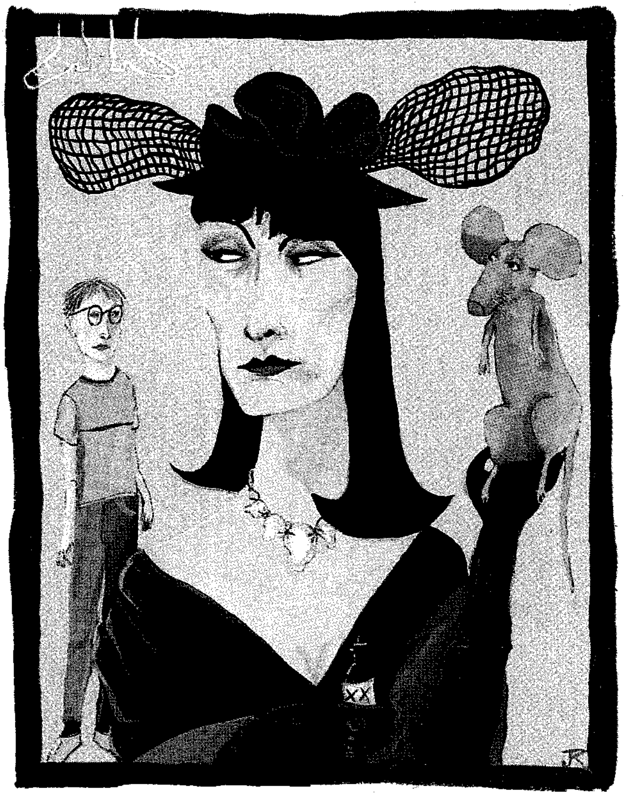
trader who clearly doesn't deserve her; she and Robbie—you guessed it—fall for each other. The movie is full of inspired touches as well as excessive ones: its appeal lies in the way its humor always treads the line between sendup and campy overkill. Long patches of it are hilarious, and it will make you nostalgic for life in the 'burbs, even if you grew up in the city. Directed by Frank Coraci, from a screenplay by Tim Herlihy.—*D. M.* (Criterion Center, Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Witches (1990)—The ads said "From the imagination of Jim Henson and director Nicolas Roeg." It would have been more accurate to say "From the imagination of the writer Roald Dahl." This quirky fairy-tale movie is about the diabolical, gleeful evil that's hidden behind normality. What Henson and Roeg supply is their craftsmanship and their affection for the novel's adult, calmly macabre tone. As the Grand High Witch of the World, the black-clad Anjelica Huston lifts her arm up high in a towering salute and, addressing the witches of England at their annual meeting, she outlines her plan: all the childen in the land are to be turned into mice. The nine-year-old Luke (Jasen Fisher), who overhears her speech, is hunted down and transformed. The movie doesn't have Dahl's narrative confidence and it goes in for a little sweetening, but it has major compensations. The two mice are triumphs for Henson's workshop. Mai Zetterling is the hypnotic storytelling granny of our dreams. And Huston is a gutsy, camp witch, with an accent that slips like her features; her terrified underlings—bald, drag-queen witches—are like a child's drawings of the devil.—*P. K.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Feb. 28-March 1.)

Zero Effect—Bill Pullman, exploring the madness beneath his usual screen persona of excruciating decency, plays a brilliant, agoraphobic detective; Ben Stiller is his more normal assistant; and Ryan O'Neal is their client, a preppy tycoon looking for a set of lost keys. Jake Kasdan's first film has a dark, cartoonish tone and a few clever moments, but ultimately it feels both overwritten and insufficiently thought through. The most glaring zero of all is Pullman and Stiller's chemistry: their scenes together are slow and jerky, like a tennis game between two players who can't get the ball over the net.—*S. K.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALSO PLAYING

AFTERGLOW (reviewed in our issue of 1/19/98): Regency.... **AMISTAD:** Embassy 2 and Lincoln Square.... **AYN RAND: A SENSE OF LIFE:** Quad Cinema.... **BLUES BROTHERS 2000:** Chelsea West, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Waverly.... **THE BORROWERS:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Twin, and Village East Cinemas.... **DESPERATE MEASURES:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.... **FALLEN:** Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.... **FALLEN ANGELS:** Film Forum.... **THE FULL MONTY:** Sutton.... **HURRICANE STREETS:** Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and 19th Street East 6.... **MA VIE EN ROSE:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.... **OSCAR AND LUCINDA** (1/12/98): 62nd & Broadway and 72nd Street East.... **PAUL MONETTE: THE BRINK OF SUMMER'S END:** Quad Cinema.... **RACHET:** Village East Cinemas.... **SPHERE:** Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.... **SPICE WORLD** (1/26/98): Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and 34th Street Showplace.... **TOMORROW NEVER DIES:** Art Greenwich Twin, Criterion Center, and Park & 86th Street Cinemas.



At the Walter Reade Theatre, Anjelica Huston in "The Witches."

JULIA KUHL

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through Feb. 26 (except Feb. 23): "Shock Corridor" (1963, Samuel Fuller).... Feb. 23: "Memory Lane" (1926, John M. Stahl), "A Tailor-Made Man" (1931, Sam Wood), and "Remote Control" (1930, Malcolm St. Clair and Nick Grinde), all with William Haines.... From Feb. 27: "Rashomon" (1951, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Feb. 19 and Feb. 26 at 6: Two programs in a series about the history of 8-mm. films and videos in the United States.... Feb. 19 at 6:30 and Feb. 20 at 3: "A Life Apart: Hasidism in America" (1997, Menachem Daum).... Feb. 20 at 2:30 and Feb. 24 at 6: "Cream Cheese" (1962, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian) and two short films about Pasolini made for television.... Feb. 20 at 6:30 and Feb. 23 at 2:30: "We All Loved Each Other So Much" (1974, Ettore Scola; in Italian).... Feb. 21 at 2 and March 2 at 6: "And the Ship Sails On" (1984, Federico Fellini; in Italian).... Feb. 21 at 2:30 and Feb. 22 at 2: A showing of the short films nominated for Academy Awards in the animated and live-action categories.... Feb. 21 at 5 and Feb. 24 at 2:30: "Ghosts in Rome" (1960, Antonio Pietrangeli; in Italian).... Feb. 21 at 5, Feb. 27 at 6 and 8, Feb. 28 at 5, and March 1 at 2:30: A showing of the five films nominated for Academy Awards in the feature-length-documentary category.... Feb. 22 at 2 and Feb. 26 at 6: "Gold of Naples" (1956, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian).... Feb. 22 at 5 and Feb. 26 at 2:30: "Voyage to Italy" (1954, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian).... Feb. 23 at 6: "Stromboli" (1950, Rossellini; in Italian).... Feb. 23 at 6:30: Films by Jim Jennings.... Feb. 24 at 3: "Volcano" (1950, William Dieterle; in Italian).... Feb. 26 at 6:30 and Feb. 27 at 3: "George" (1997, Henry Corra and Grahame Weinbren).... Feb. 27 at 2:30: "L'Avventura" (1959, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian).... Feb. 27 at 6 and March 2 at 2:30: "Allonsanfan" (1975, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani; in Italian).... Feb. 27 at 8 and March 3 at 2:30: "The Battle of Algiers" (†).... Feb. 28 at 2: "Dear Diary" (1993, Nanni Moretti; in Italian).... Feb. 28 at 2 and March 3 at 6: "The Vanquished" (1953, Antonioni; in Italian).... Feb. 28 at 5: "A Blow to the Heart" (1982, Gianni Amelio; in Italian).... March 1 at 2: "Misery and Nobility" (1954, Mario Mattoli; in Italian).... March 1 at 5: "Bitter Rice" (1948, Giuseppe De Santis; in Italian).... March 2 at 3: The first program in a showing of the five films nominated for Academy Awards in the foreign-language category.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Feb. 25: A program of Hungarian films; in Hungarian, with English subtitles.... ¶ Feb. 19 at 6:30: "Travis" (1997, Richard Kotuk).... ¶ Weekend showings for children. Feb. 22 at 2: "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" (1968, Ken Hughes).... Feb. 28 and March 1 at 2: "The Witches" (†).... ¶ Starting Feb. 27: A program of films for which Toru Takemitsu wrote the music; all in Japanese, with English subtitles.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films directed by Douglas Sirk. Feb. 21 at 2: "Captain Lightfoot" (1954).... Feb. 21 at 4: "Has Anybody Seen My Gal?" (1951).... Feb. 22 at 2: "Written on the Wind" (1957).... Feb. 22 at 4: "All That Heaven Allows" (1955).... Feb. 28 at 2: "Tarnished Angels" (1957).... Feb. 28 at 4: "All I Desire" (1953).... March 1 at 2: "A Time to Love and a Time to Die" (1957).... March 1 at 4:30: "Imitation of Life" (1958).... ¶ Feb. 18-20 at 2: "Fairy Tale: A True Story" (1997, Charles Sturridge).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Feb. 22 at 7, the feature will be "Eyes of Laura Mars" (†); on March 1 at 7, "The Bad and the Beautiful" (1952, Vincente Minnelli).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through Feb. 28: "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" (1974, John Korty).... From March 1: "Promise" (†). (Showings Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2 and 4; Thursdays and Fridays at 2, 4, and 6.)

Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.—From Feb. 26: The 14th Annual Israel Film Festival. (For information about show times, call 674-5999.)

Paris, 4 W. 58th St.—Through March 5, fourteen films produced and/or directed by Ismail Merchant and James Ivory (including "Shakespeare Wallah," "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge," and "Howards End") will be shown. For information about show times, call 688-3800.

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—A series of films that have won, or been nominated for, the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. Feb. 24 at 7: "The Bicycle Thief" (1949, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian).... Feb. 24 at 8:45: "When Father Was Away on Business" (1985, Emir Kusturica).... March 3 at 7: "The Burmese Harp" (1956, Kon Ichikawa; in Japanese).... March 3 at 9:15: "The Tin Drum" (1979, Volker Schlöndorff; in German).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Feb. 24 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "A Chef in Love" (1996, Nana Djordjadze; in Georgian and French).

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

THE LAST GOOD PLACE

Considering the potent combination of a hotel room and a prosecutor.

EVERYBODY'S a prosecutor these days. Crimes and misdemeanors are coaxed first and committed later, devised before they're detected. Even the tabloids are making their own form of citizen's arrests. It's catch-as-catch-can justice, innocent until enticed into guilt, the inductive rather than the deductive school of law enforcement. In today's prosecutorial culture, anyone is prey—interns, Interior Secretaries, sportscasters. And the best hunting ground seems to be the hotel, the natural habitat of the peripatetic, a place where hookers and now federal agents do some of their best work.

For the Feds, it used to be "Take 'em downtown and book 'em." Now it's "Book me a suite at the Ritz-Carlton." It was at the Ritz-Carlton in Pentagon City, Virginia, that a half-dozen agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and prosecutors from the Office of the Independent Counsel surrounded Monica Lewinsky and asked her to come upstairs and have a chat. The Ritz-Carlton in Pentagon City was also the site of another sort of sting: it's where the sportscaster Marv Albert allegedly bit a woman on the back and forced her to perform oral sex.

Hotel rooms have been the venue for government undercover operations in the cases of Washington's Mayor Marion Barry (a Vista hotel); of the seven congressmen convicted in the Abscam investigation; and of the former carmaker John DeLorean (L'Enfant Plaza Hotel, in Washington). Hotel rooms have also been the site of more informal undercover operations, involving the sportscaster Frank Gifford (the Regency, on Park Avenue), the political consultant Dick Morris (the Jefferson, in Washington), and the preacher Jimmy Swaggart (a no-tell motel along Airline Highway, in Louisiana).

Why hotels? For one thing, people tend not to commit crimes at home. Hotels are the Cayman Islands of interpersonal relations, a kind of offshore oasis outside the boundaries of normal ethical behavior. Strangers on unusual errands meet in hotels. So do F.B.I. agents. The cops can book a room, set up video cameras, and raid the mini-bar. You can even ask the front desk to hold the maid service.

Videotape doesn't lie, and it is the witness of choice for government sting operations. But the videos made by these investigators don't tell us much about the government's taste in hotel rooms. The videotape of Marion Barry's cocaine bust was so dark and grainy that all you could see of the Vista Hotel room was a lamp, a mirror, and a bed. The Abscam videos exhibited fairly shabby, nondescript rooms that were not in keeping with the splendor of the phony Arab sheikhs who were supposedly renting them. (The government was saving you money!) The photographs of Dick Morris and a call girl disclosed only a balcony and a sumptuous couch in his four-hundred-and-forty-dollar-a-night suite at the Jefferson Hotel. The video of Frank Gifford and a former stewardess hired by the *Globe* revealed a rumpled king-size bed with a floral pattern on the bedspread, not unlike the ones in the soft-core-porn movies guests can order on the hotel's video system.

The moral of all these hotel encounters seems to be this: Stay home, or, at least, don't leave the lobby. "In hotels, you're getting only the illusion of privacy," says Ed Hayes, a Manhattan lawyer and a former prosecutor in the Bronx district attorney's office. "Real gangsters, straight-out hoodlums, do a walk-and-talk, so that no one can overhear them." Marion Barry knew as much. When he called Rasheeda Moore from the lobby of the Vista Hotel that January night in 1990, she invited him up. He said, "I don't like to go in hotel rooms," but she coaxed him upstairs. Forty minutes later, he was cuffed by F.B.I. agents, who arrested him for illegal possession of narcotics. "Bitch set me up," he muttered, echoing the sense of betrayal felt by sting victims everywhere. "God damn, I shouldn't have come up here. If I had followed my instincts tonight, I'd have been all right. I should have stayed downstairs." —RICHARD STENGEL

THE PICTURES

A Hollywood eminence offers the President some spin advice.

DESPITE his recent troubles, Bill Clinton still has at least one vehement defender in Hollywood, and his name isn't Barbra Streisand. "It's horrible to ruin the country over this ding-a-ling girl. It's not a joke. It's the woman who's the seducer, not the man. It's always the woman's play, where and when. Clinton may have been a fool, but he's not a seducer." And anyway, the defender adds, "the Oval Office has been tarnished by every President who's been in there who's

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

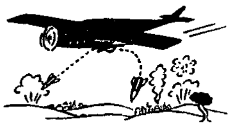
not a homosexual, and I have proof.”

It’s Robert Evans, on the phone from Mexico, where he is holed up working on what he calls an “awareness book” titled “Seduction.” (His description makes it sound like a guide for those who would be seducer-proof.) A high-living and fast-talking producer (“Chinatown,” “Marathon Man”) who also headed production at Paramount during a memorable period in the late sixties and early seventies, Evans has more recently been in the public view thanks to the film “Wag the Dog.” He has been identified as the model for Dustin Hoffman’s character, a high-living and fast-talking producer who, at the behest of a Washington fixer played by Robert De Niro, whips up a phony war to distract the nation from a White House sex scandal. Indeed, Evans has some experience in these matters, claiming to have helped Henry Kissinger out of an unspecified scrape back in the seventies. Evans says that he also assisted Clarence Thomas during his confirmation hearings, in 1991: “I helped write his speech about it all being Kafkaesque, which, frankly, got him in.” (When asked to confirm this, a top Bush Administration official involved in the hearings said, “Who’s Robert Evans?” Evans stands by his story: “I have tapes to prove it.”)

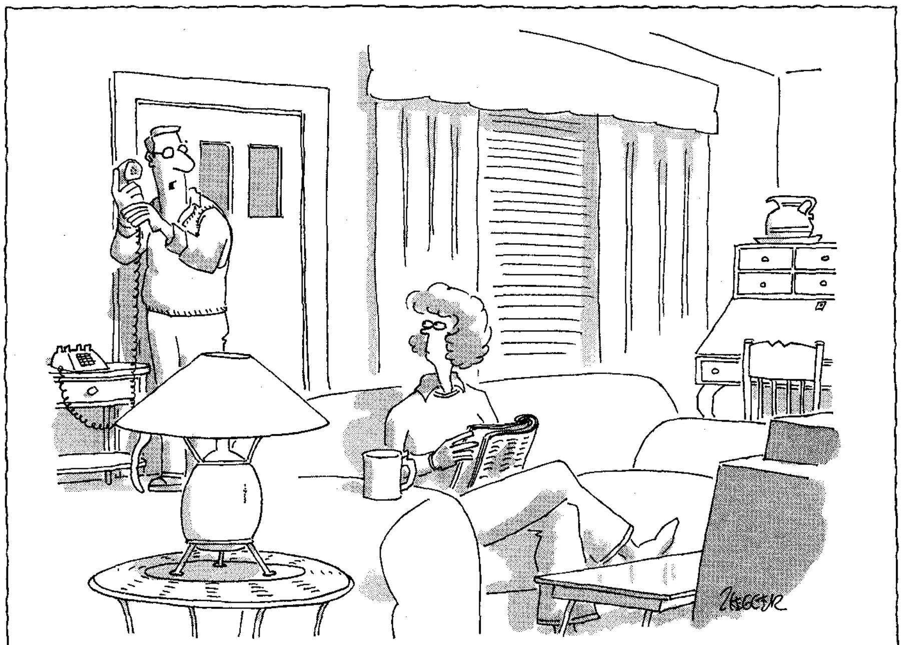
So what advice does Evans have for real-life D.C. fixers? “I would try and start a groundswell to have our President reëlected to a *third* term,” he told me. “If they called, I’d go in a minute. I believe in him, and I’m a conservative Republican. He’s a man who’s contributed to America, and they’re throwing him to the locusts.” He added, “There’s more important things to worry about than the hair on a woman’s pussy.” Who could disagree? —BRUCE HANDY

FAX FROM JERUSALEM

Who do you have to know to get a gas mask these days?



In the pecking order of Israeli society, the gas mask indicates where you stand. As the country began preparing for a possible Iraqi missile attack, the Israeli government acknowledged a severe shortage of protective gear. Hence the problem: Who gets the masks first?



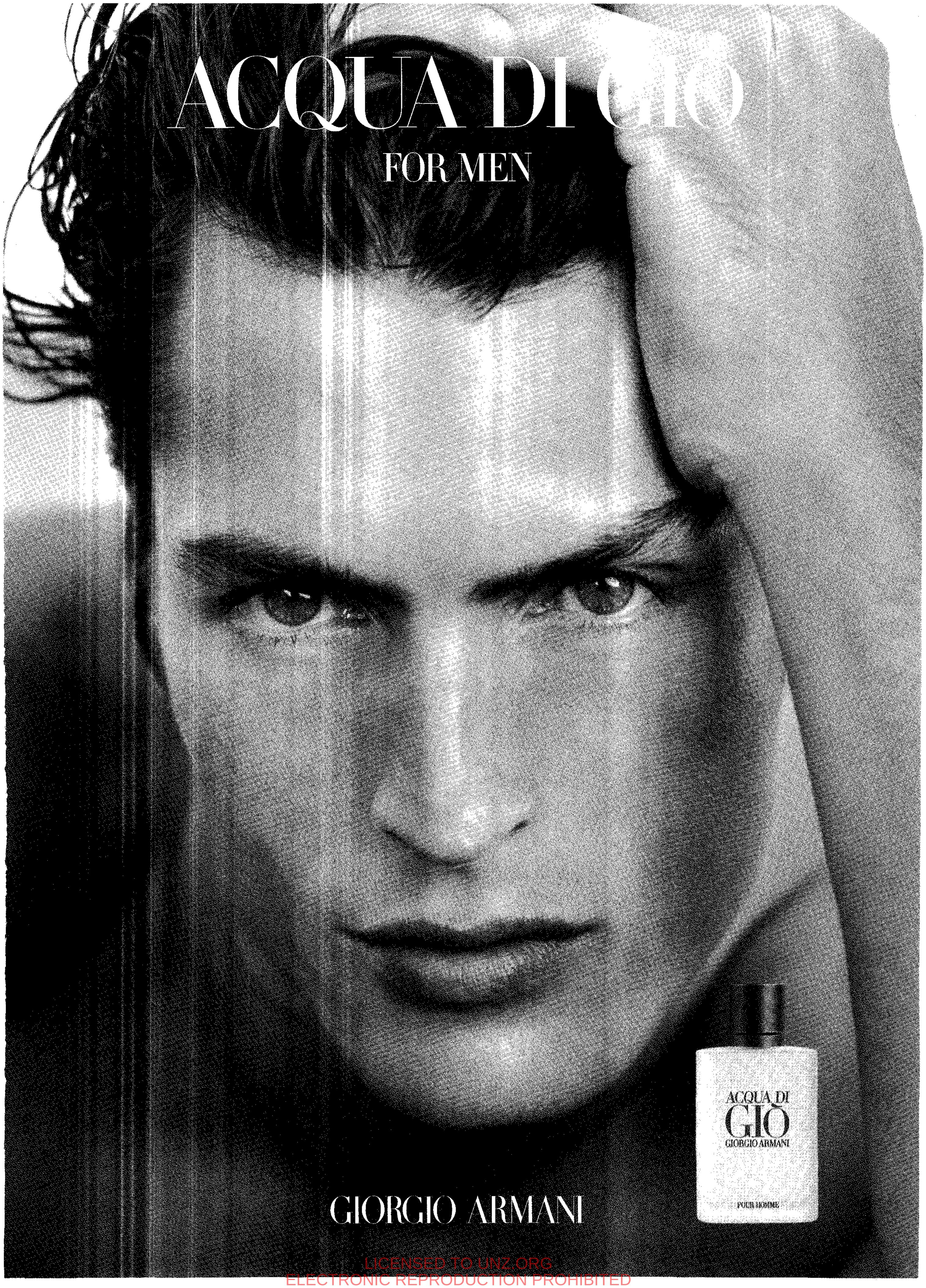
“It’s NBC. They want to know what it’s personally worth to us for them to keep ‘E.R.’ on the air.”

Not the women and children. The élite in a gas-mask-based class system are Israel’s soldiers. The Home Front Command ordered Shalon Chemical Industries, Israel’s only manufacturer of gas masks, to stop selling them to civilians and to devote its energy to filling its Army contract. One rung below the soldiers are Israeli civilians. At a chaotic mask-distribution center in a Jerusalem mall, the crowd pressed in on the soldiers in charge. “I’ve been waiting nine hours—where is the logic to this system?” one woman yelled. “There is no logic,” the soldier replied. “By the time your baby gets a gas mask, he’ll be old enough to serve in the Army.” There was more dignity in the lifeboat scenes from “Titanic.”

Next in the hierarchy are Israel’s minorities. Members of the ultra-Orthodox community are calling the gas-mask campaign a secular conspiracy to trick religious men into shaving. “In Hitler’s time, Jews were forced to shave their beards. We won’t let it happen again,” Rabbi Chaim Miller, head of the Ultra-Orthodox Civil Rights Society, told me. An Army spokesman said they would provide special masks that cover beards, but they were having trouble locating the right batteries to operate the filters. Miller dismissed this as an excuse: “So what are they going to do—scurry around looking for batteries while the Scuds are flying over?” Deaf Israelis are claiming that air-raid sirens are unfair and demanding that the government provide them with special vibrating beepers. And Israeli Arabs are grumbling because there are no distribution points in their villages.

At least they are citizens, with the inalienable right to a mask. Anyone without an Israeli identity card is being turned away. Of course, the Army has promised that in a state of emergency it will provide every person, regardless of nationality, with a mask. In the meantime, a United States Embassy official told me that the Embassy has a stash of masks reserved for American personnel. Foreign workers from Romania, Thailand, and the Philippines have enlisted the help of the Israeli Attorney General to pressure their employers to buy them masks. Illegal aliens from Africa are demonstrating in the streets of Tel Aviv, carrying signs that read, “Have mercy, give us masks. We are defenseless and without help.”

In 1991, the last time Saddam Hussein fired his Scuds, tourists arriving at the Tel Aviv airport were issued gas masks at the baggage carousel, like Hawaiian leis. The Laromme Jerusalem Hotel, where Secretary of State Madeleine Albright recently stayed, offered arriving guests protection kits, which they could later drop off at the airport,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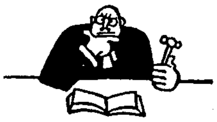
"like a rental car," according to a concierge. And at the Tel Aviv Hilton, where television crews filmed incoming missiles from the rooftop in 1991, the management opened a banquet hall and handed out gas masks and pastries to all hotel guests.

The two groups who may rank the lowest in the gas-mask social order are the foreign press and the local dogs. Animal-rights groups are demanding protective gear for their pets, but the government is not responding. "Dogs are Israeli citizens, too," Eti Altman, an activist with Let Animals Live, said last week. "They pay taxes, they are born here. They'll suffer a terrible death." As for foreign journalists, the Government Press Office says that if the need arises it will issue masks to them.

"We'll see how Netanyahu *really* feels about the press," one G.P.O. clerk said, with a gleam in his eye. Don't hold your breath. —LAURA BLUMENFELD

THE BENCH

Oprah Winfrey provokes an identity crisis in the Lone Star State.



IT'S taken a visit from Oprah Winfrey to show Amarillo how much it has changed. This is one of the most good-natured cities in Texas, and one that has been sustained by cattle since it was first settled, in the eighteen-eighties. That was probably why a group of local cattlemen thought that they could count on the support of the people of Amarillo when they sued Winfrey for more than ten million dollars, accusing her of making disparaging remarks about American beef on her talk show. ("It has just stopped me cold from eating another burger," Oprah said after a vegetarian activist told her that mad-cow disease could spread to the United States.) But the cattlemen were wrong. By filing the lawsuit, which claimed, under a new and tenuous "food libel" law, that Oprah's comments had caused them disastrous financial losses, they had placed Amarillo right where it did not want to be: smack between the old Texas and the new.

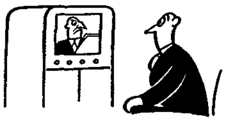
The cattle business is now run by computers and by men with M.B.A.s, but its myths have not been similarly updated. The silent, independent, hardworking cowboy has been the prototypical Texas male for generations. Though the plaintiffs tried to style themselves as such, many locals saw instead rich men who'd had a bad couple of years; cattle prices had already tumbled, thanks to a lengthy drought and high feed prices, long before Oprah's broadcast. It didn't help that Paul Engler, the most vocal plaintiff, had started out in the feed business in Nebraska and was seen around the courthouse with his flashy blond wife. "He lost a little money before," one local woman asserted. "He's gonna lose a lotta money this time."

It had to gall these rich, white, rural Texas males that a rich, black, urban female celebrity seemed to know Amarillo better than they did. Oprah was ready: her producers had grilled journalists all over the state weeks before she arrived, boning up on everything from mansions and restaurants to eligible men for material for upcoming shows. She created jobs, hiring off-duty policemen to guard the makeshift studio from which she broadcast her show; she talked book clubs with the mayor's wife; she shopped at Wal-Mart and gave away a Ford truck on her birthday. Understanding that mythology had been eclipsed by celebrity, she conflated the two and booked Texas-friendly heartthrobs like Clint Black and Patrick Swayze. "My wife controls the remote," an employee of the Stockyards Café sheepishly admitted. Over at Alexa's Beauty Supply and Salon, in the black part of town, twenty-dollar T-shirts with Oprah's picture on them sold out over and over again.

As the trial progressed, an Amarillo *Globe-News* poll favored Oprah 8,248–1,017. On the stand, it was no contest. Oprah held her audience by confessing that the lawsuit was "the most painful thing I've ever experienced." Engler, in contrast, resembled dead meat. —MIMI SWARTZ

RIP VAN WINKLE DEPT.

When it comes to scandal-watching, latecomers will not be seated.



PICTURE yourself at a country weekend get-together to which you have come a day later than everyone else. By Saturday afternoon, when you arrive, a history of incidents and accidents has already built up around the occasion. Friday night, you're told, something hilarious happened with the spaghetti sauce. People keep explaining it to you, and you get the general idea, but you can't connect with the emotional core of it. You echo the group's laughter, but you feel nothing. You miss all kinds of oblique references and in-jokes, even though you are surrounded by old friends. You are a tourist in their freshly formed collectivity.

It's the same with me and the national Monica Lewinsky obsession. I was in Russia when the scandal broke, and ever since I've been feeling not up to speed, behind the curve. For a week, I was fed scraps of data by the unconvincing international cable arms of CNN and NBC. The first night, I turned on the hotel TV in time to hear ". . . are already casting doubt on the veracity of Linda Tripp, while others are discussing who might be Vice-President in a Gore Administration." I nearly choked on my pillow mint—Linda who? Gore what? But the generic Euronews plowed on: "Meanwhile, in Algeria, the recent visit of a European Union ministerial mission has resulted in . . ."

My incomprehension has edged into boredom and petulance. I don't know who Linda Tripp is, and I don't care. The country has bonded in a round-the-clock MSNBC sleepover, and I'm out in the cold. I know, however, that I am not alone; I've heard the same outcast, dejected tone from those who missed the Bronco chase on television. And perhaps America now seems a little impatient with the Lewinsky affair because a crucial percentage of the population chose the wrong moment to go for a drive, or to visit rustic relatives, or to put a lot of things on top of other things in the basement.

—ALEX ROSS

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Panel Discussion

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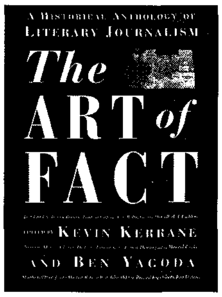
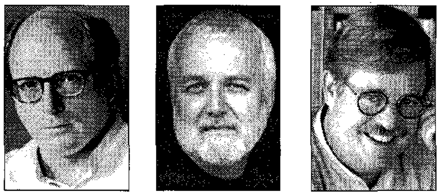
Panel Discussion



Join us when Kevin Kerrane and Ben Yagoda, authors of *The Art of Fact: A Historical Anthology of Literary Journalism*, moderate a panel discussion featuring writers Gay Talese, Richard Ben Cramer, Rosemary Mahoney and Michael Winerip.

A Slow Read in a Fast World

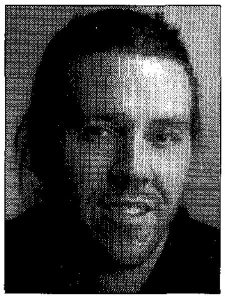
Wednesday, February 25th, 7:30-8:30 PM
Union Square, 33 East 17th Street
Panel Discussion



In celebration of the launch of HarperFlamingo, a new imprint of HarperCollins, Leonard Lopate will host a panel discussion about the literary novel in today's world. Panelists will include Oscar Hijuelos, Russell Banks and Armistead Maupin.

David Foster Wallace

Thursday, February 26th, 7:30-8:30 PM
Union Square, 33 East 17th Street
Reading • Signing



The bestselling author of *Infinite Jest*, David Foster Wallace, will read from and sign copies of *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again*, a collection of hilarious essays on everything from tennis to the Illinois State Fair.

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BOOK CURRENTS

Alta California

HAVING lived in San Francisco on and off since 1960, the director Philip Kaufman, whose movies include "The Right Stuff," "The Unbearable Lightness of Being," "Henry and June," and "Rising Sun" (each one a literary adaptation), understands the allure of Northern California. At one time, he says, "it was the end of the earth—the Barbary Coast." Some thirty or forty years ago, the people who headed for California—whether they were attracted by the intellectual climate or the meteorological one—really had to want to get there. "Before there were real jet airplanes, it took some doing to get to the West Coast," Kaufman says. "Now it's stitched to the rest of the country more than it used to be."

San Francisco is particularly receptive to poets, novelists, and journalists, and Kaufman has no trouble rattling off a long list of Northern California writers—or writers who at one time made their home in the area—whose work he has enjoyed over the years. He loves Gina Berriault's WOMEN IN THEIR BEDS (Counterpoint), a collection of finely wrought short stories. He also admires the work of novelist Evan S. Connell, particularly the interlocking novels MRS. BRIDGE and MR. BRIDGE (both published by North Point Press) and SON OF THE MORNING STAR: CUSTER AND THE LITTLE BIG HORN (also North Point Press), a detailed history of the events surrounding the famous battle. The San Francisco-based writer Barry Gifford is the author of the novel WILD AT HEART (Grove/Atlantic), which was made into a film by David Lynch. (Gifford also collaborated with Lynch on last year's "Lost Highway.") His most recent book, THE PHANTOM FATHER: A MEMOIR (Harcourt Brace), is a series of autobiographical vignettes, mostly about his father, a racketeer who ran an all-night drugstore and liquor store in Chicago in the nineteen-fifties.

The Bay Area is also home to Nobel Prize winner Czeslaw Milosz, whom Kaufman calls "arguably the greatest living poet." Milosz's numerous volumes of poetry include THE COLLECTED POEMS: 1931-1987 (Ecco) and FACING THE RIVER: NEW POEMS (Ecco). He's also the author of an acclaimed nonfiction work, THE CAPTIVE MIND (Random House), a study of creativity among writers in totalitarian societies.

T. Coraghessan Boyle is another of Kaufman's favorites: his new novel, RIVEN ROCK (Viking), set in the early part of this century, tells the story of a husband and wife torn apart by madness. He also mentions Leonard Gardner's FAT CITY (University of California Press), a cult novel about small-time boxing in Stockton, California, that was the basis for one of John Huston's most acclaimed films. And Berkeley professor and cultural critic Greil Marcus's INVISIBLE REPUBLIC: BOB DYLAN'S BASEMENT TAPES (Henry Holt) is mostly about Dylan but also about the ageless, ghostlike folk songs that haunt the American landscape.

Kaufman names two writers who no longer live in Northern California but who have contributed at one time or another to its literary scene. The critic and novelist Diane Johnson, who now lives in Paris, is the author of a book about another California writer, DASHIELL HAMMETT: A LIFE. The screenwriter John Kaye (whose credits include "Rafferty and the Gold Dust Twins" and "American Hot Wax") currently lives in Los Angeles but spent thirteen years in Mill Valley. His STARS SCREAMING (Atlantic Monthly Press), about a screenwriter in nineteen-seventies Hollywood, isn't just another novel about Tinseltown as a boulevard of broken dreams: it acknowledges the dizzying complexity of a town that's made *and* broken so many people.

According to Kaufman, there's one good reason Northern California may be conducive to so much creativity and stimulation. "We do have a lot of coffee shops," he says. "All around us are these coffee shops and little bars." He notes that one of the problems you encounter when writers get together is that they end up talking mostly about themselves. Still, the idea of having a "communal world" that's hospitable to thinking, reading, and writing has always appealed to Kaufman. "Not everyone should write," he says. "But everyone should read."

ADAM MCCAULEY

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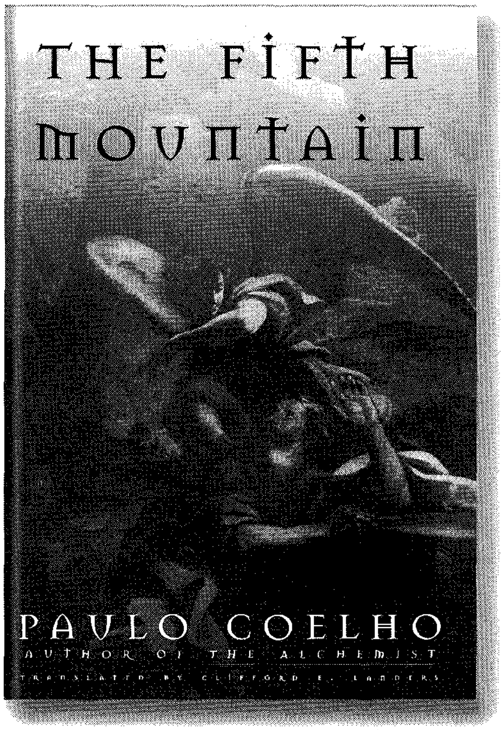
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AUTHOR OF THE ALCHEMIST
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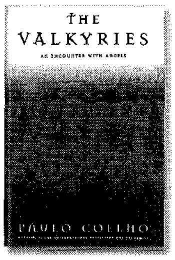
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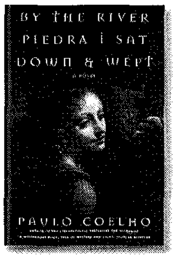
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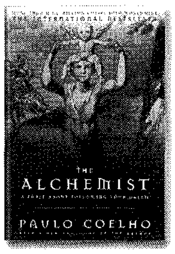
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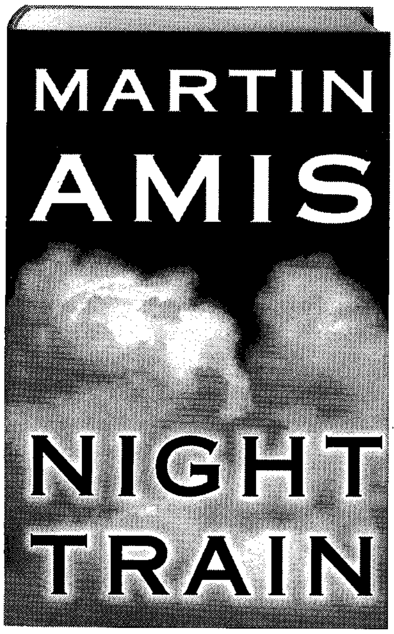

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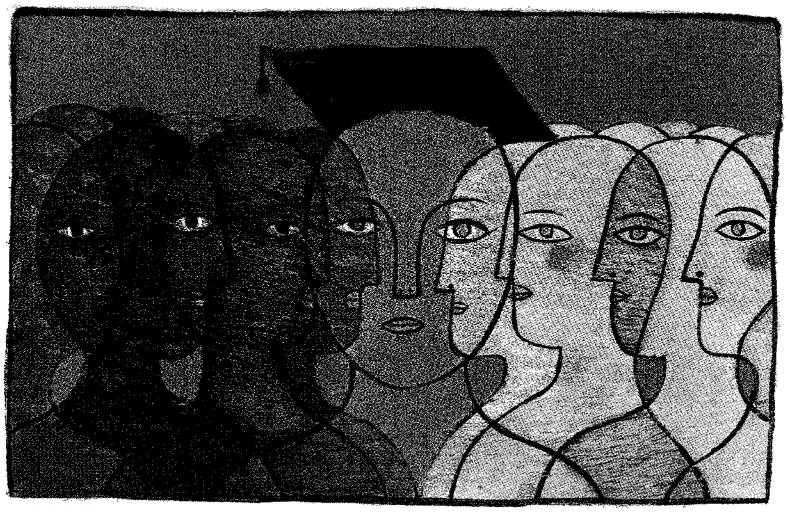
ANNALS OF LAW

DAMAGE CONTROL

The unintended consequences of Proposition 209 have forced some of its stauncher supporters to reconsider. But is it too late?

BY JEFFREY ROSEN

On November 5, 1996, the voters of California approved Proposition 209, which says, "The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education or public contracting." Before the election, both sides agreed that if Prop. 209 should be enacted it would abolish affirmative action in the state. For supporters of the initiative, this was a promise; for opponents, it was a threat. Ever since 209 passed, however, those who opposed it have been reluctant to admit defeat. The law, they now say, will have only a limited impact. "I don't believe 209 has much of an application in this city," Willie Brown, the mayor of San Francisco, told me, when I visited him just before Christmas. "It's not even a blip." Sitting at a cherrywood conference table in front of an imposing portrait of Thurgood Marshall, Brown said that because the city was not "doing preferences" he couldn't think of a single program in San Francisco that he planned to abandon in the face of 209.



For Boalt Hall, a 4.0 from California State is now worth as much as a 4.0 from Harvard.

STEFANO VITALE

Legally, Brown may be on shaky ground; politically, however, he has a lot of company. On February 23rd, the Reverend Jesse Jackson will lead a march in Los Angeles to encourage city, state, and federal officials to defy Proposition 209. "South Carolina considered the states'-rights proposition, and Lincoln had to say no," Jackson told me in December. "Orval Faubus considered the states'-rights proposition, and Eisenhower had to say no. Now Governor Pete Wilson has considered the states'-rights proposition, and Clinton must say no."

This attitude both appalls and amuses Tom Wood and Glynn Custred, the authors of Prop. 209. When I spoke with the two men in Berkeley, they, too, invoked the rhetoric of earlier civil-rights struggles. "Willie Brown, like his soulmate George Wallace, is standing in the way of civil rights, and we will use every legal means available to force Willie Brown to obey the law," said Custred, a professor of anthropology at California State University at Hayward. "The ultimate in hypocrisy," Brown replied when I repeated this remark to him. "People who say that are the same horror spielers who use Martin Luther King's name as

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they advocate bigotry with 209. There is no honesty and no honor and zero morality among them."

Given the fervor of both its supporters and its opponents, Proposition 209 may become a full-employment program for California lawyers. (Last year, the Supreme Court refused to hear a constitutional challenge to the measure.) But the initiative has already been implemented in enough places to make California a sobering preview of a post-affirmative-action world. And, to judge from the experience of the state's élite law schools, the San Francisco Fire Department, and the Los Angeles Police Department, those who voted for Proposition 209 on the ground that affirmative action was the antithesis of meritocracy were a little too hasty. The alternative to affirmative action, it turns out, may be far worse.

The University of California, in response to a resolution by the Board of Regents, ended affirmative action last year, with dramatic and well-publicized consequences. At the U.C.L.A. School of Law, the number of African-Americans accepted fell eighty per cent between 1996 and 1997, from a hundred and four students to only twenty-one, eight of whom enrolled, along with two who had been accepted in 1996. At Berkeley's law school, Boalt Hall, the drop in blacks admitted was also steep, from seventy-four students to fifteen—and only one African-American, who had deferred admission from the previous year, chose to enroll.

That came as a surprise to John Yoo, a thirty-year-old acting professor at Boalt Hall who had enthusiastically supported Prop. 209. The son of two psychiatrists who emigrated from Korea to Philadelphia with him three months after he was born, Yoo has been an opponent of affirmative action for as long as he can remember. At Harvard College, where he was deputy editorial chair of the *Crimson*, he wrote broadsides denouncing alleged admissions quotas that capped the numbers of Asian students. After graduating summa cum laude, in 1989, Yoo went on to Yale Law School; he eventually clerked for Justice Clarence Thomas during the year that Thomas wrote a memorable opinion declaring that there is "moral [and] constitutional equivalence" between laws promoting affirmative action and those supporting slavery. Thomas's opinion, Yoo said, "expressed thoughts I agree with about race and the law."

Yoo got involved with Proposition 209 while he was on leave from the Berkeley faculty and was serving as Senator Orrin Hatch's general counsel on the Judiciary Committee. "I had no idea what would happen," Yoo said. "The numbers had always been available, but I had never looked to see what the effect of 209 would be on admissions. I didn't realize the score gaps were so huge."

The numbers are indeed stark. In 1997, the average grade-point average for all applicants receiving admission offers from Boalt Hall was 3.74, and the average L.S.A.T. score was in the ninety-seventh percentile. According to an article by John E. Morris in *The American Lawyer*, just twenty-seven hundred and seven college graduates in the entire country received L.S.A.T. scores as high as the ninety-second percentile and had a G.P.A. of 3.5 or better, and only sixteen of them were black and forty-five were Hispanic. In the national pool of about seventy thousand law-school applicants, only a hundred and three blacks and two hundred and twenty-four Hispanics, compared with 7,715 whites, had L.S.A.T. scores in the eighty-third percentile or better and grade-point averages of low B-plus or above. Because the star minority students are also admitted by law schools like Harvard and Yale and Stanford, few are likely to choose Boalt or U.C.L.A. So in a post-affirmative-action world the most selective law schools will not be able to admit more than a handful of African-American students unless they adjust admissions standards for all applicants, because, as Jan Vetter, who has served on the admissions committee at Boalt Hall, told me succinctly, "Blacks and Hispanics at every level of family income score lower on the L.S.A.T.s and don't get as good grades as whites."

In the wake of Prop. 209, those adjustments are already taking place. Last November, the Boalt faculty voted to stop weighting the grade-point averages of applicants to reflect the quality of their undergraduate schools, so that a

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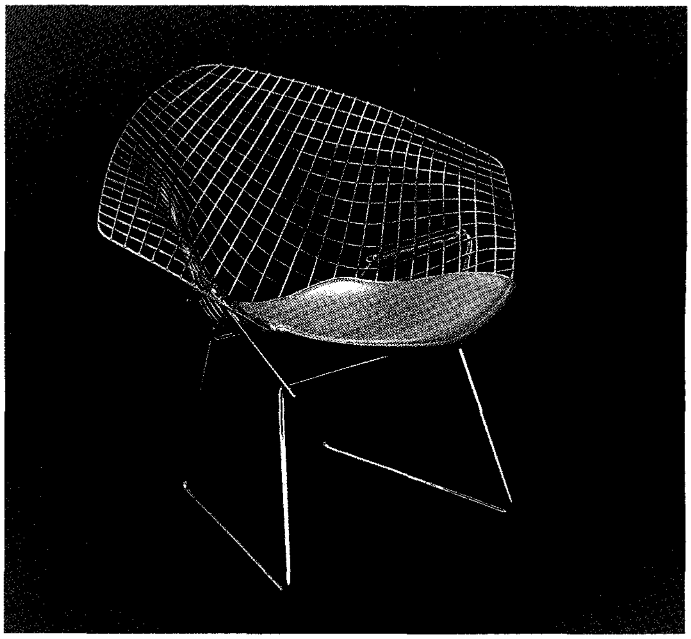

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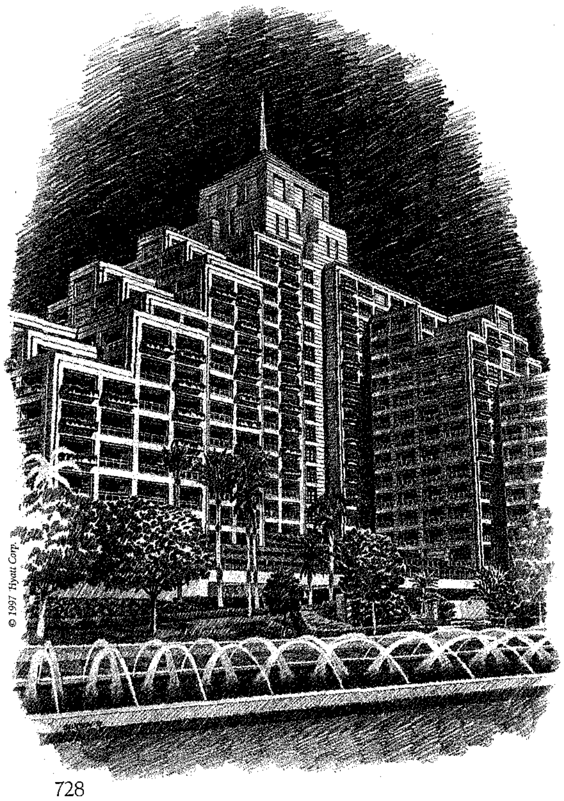
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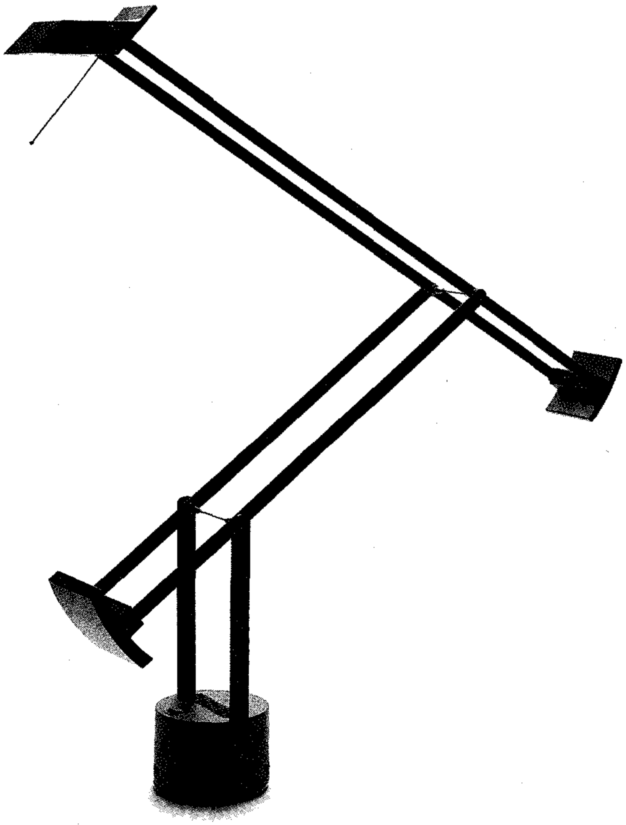
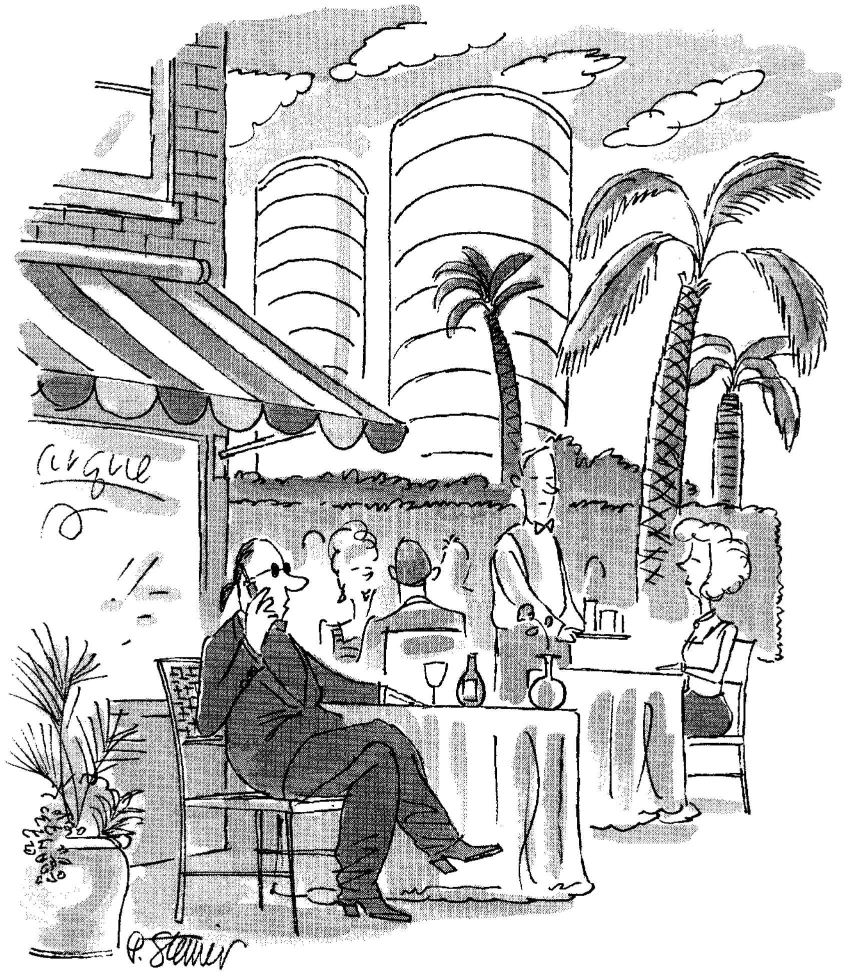


729

4.0 from California State is now worth as much as a 4.0 from Harvard. Like U.C.L.A., Boalt has adopted a system that gives a leg up to the most socio-economically disadvantaged applicants. In choosing this year's entering class, U.C.L.A. began to use seven rather Dickensian indicators of social deprivation, which included whether an applicant's mother or father went to college and whether an applicant lived in a poor neighborhood. Unfortunately, this experiment with class-based affirmative action failed to produce more African-American admissions. "I've heard talk of Iranians," says Eugene Volokh, a twenty-nine-year-old acting professor of law at U.C.L.A., who was a legal adviser for the Proposition 209 campaign. "My sense is that there have been more immigrants from the Middle East—more Iranians, more Israelis. Also, I understand that there has been a significant increase in the number of poor-to-middle-class whites."

Because the gap in scores is so wide, it's simply not possible to admit many African-Americans without taking race into account if the L.S.A.T. remains an important factor in the admissions process. The Boalt Hall faculty may vote this spring on a proposal to deëmphasize or drop the L.S.A.T. on a trial basis, even though a faculty task force concluded that the test is a good predictor of first-year grades, and most of the faculty seems reluctant to undermine the very quality that makes the law school desirable in the first place—its selectivity. "Most U.C. professors don't want to teach at a community college," Volokh told me.

Certainly this is not what John Yoo had in mind. "I really thought things would sort themselves out after Proposition 209," he said candidly. "There would be more minorities at less prestigious universities, and over time there would be more blacks and Hispanics who would appear in the more prestigious universities. What I didn't realize was how entrenched the desire to have racial diversity for its own sake was in the university sys-



"Here's the deal, Kim. I pick up eggs and butter, but no dry cleaning."

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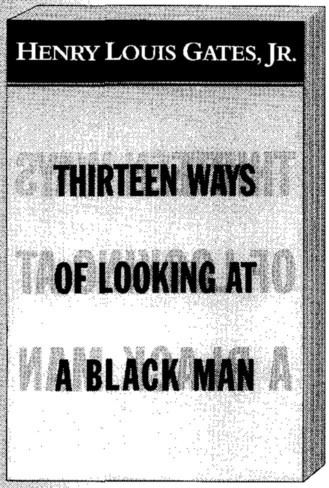

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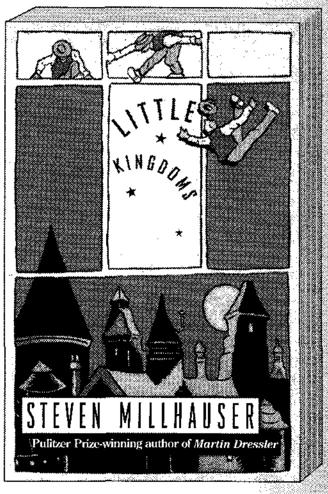

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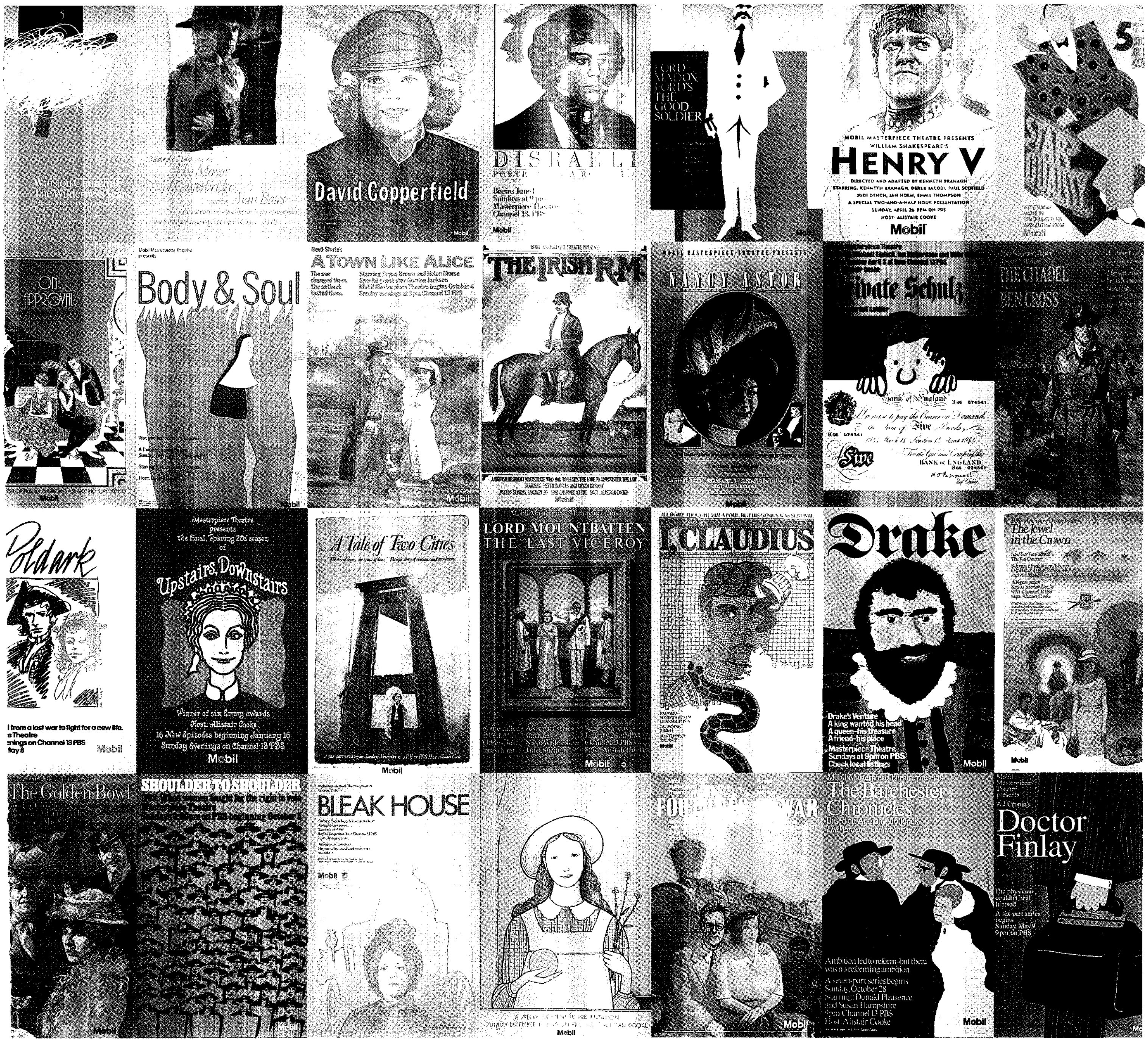
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tem, and how much pressure was going to be asserted to preserve that goal."

The pressure comes from minority voters and the candidates who court them, who believe that the institutions training California's leaders should reflect the state's population, and from the students themselves.

"I didn't realize until Proposition 209 went into effect that affirmative action, as it was applied by the schools, allowed you to have some racial diversity and at the same time to maintain intellectual standards for the majority of your institutions," Yoo said. "It was a form of limiting the damage. Now that you have to have race-neutral methods, if you still want to get African-Americans and Hispanics in you have to redefine the central mission of the research university in a way that lowers standards for everybody. That's an unintended consequence of Proposition 209, and it's unfortunate."

Proposition 209, in short, has brought into focus the following question: Is it academically or politically acceptable to define merit in a way that excludes African-Americans from the most selective public institutions? The critique of merit, of course, has been a chestnut in the more relativistic corners of the legal academy for some time. In the nineteen-eighties, the critical legal scholar Duncan Kennedy, of Harvard Law School, proposed using lotteries to assign students and faculty to law schools within a given region, and in the nineteen-nineties his new colleague Lani Guinier, among others, began to argue that standardized tests, such as the S.A.T. and the L.S.A.T., reward speed and strategic guessing over skills that are purportedly more often found in women and minorities, such as storytelling and negotiation.

Suddenly, this rather arcane academic debate has come to have a practical urgency: What definition of merit will prevent the resegregation of top-ranked schools in a post-affirmative-action world? The dean of the Graduate School of Education at Berkeley, Eugene Garcia, recently published an Op-Ed piece in the *Times* calling on the University of California Regents to eliminate the S.A.T. But doing that would make many more white students eligible for admission as well, so the only way to capture minority students in numbers proportionate to the population at large without taking race into account would be to use a lottery system. The result would be the end of Berkeley as a first-class university: when New York's City College adopted open-admissions policies, in 1970, it was transformed from a highly selective research university into a troubled community college. "I am not, myself, in the Duncan Kennedy position of endorsing lotteries, but I do think the issue 'What is merit?' is worth debating," the writer Nicholas Lemann, who is working on a book about the American meritocracy, says. "And when I hear that question I don't think, Oh, my God, the Huns are at the gate. The real gripe is with the idea that permanent decisions about who will join the leadership group in society are made at a very early age on the sole basis of one criterion, which is academic performance."

MEANWHILE, a similar debate about the redefinition of merit is being played out across the Bay in the San Francisco Fire Department, which has played a large role in the city's imagination since the Great Fire of 1906. One of the city's most distinctive monuments, Coit Tower, was constructed in the shape of a fire-hose nozzle with a bequest from Lillie Hitchcock Coit, a local heiress, who was so enamored of the San Francisco fire brigade that she accompanied the firefighters on their midnight rounds. But the Fire Department has also played a large role in the city's struggles with affirmative action. It hired no black firefighters before 1955, allowed no women to apply before 1976, and hired no women until 1987. In a series of lawsuits beginning in 1971, federal judges invalidated entry-level written exams administered by the Fire Department, because they had an "adverse impact" on African-Americans without being clearly related to the requirements of the job. In 1977, a consent decree in effect established hiring goals that reflected a forty-percent minority population. In 1987, the consent decree was extended to include women, and, during the decade that followed, the San Francisco Fire Department became one of the most diverse of its size in the country. Of its new hires in that decade, nearly sixty per cent were minority members and more than sixteen per cent were women.

To achieve those goals, however, the department had to pass over a lot of white males. The department got around this with a device called "a sliding band," I was told by John Cooper, a deputy San Francisco city attorney representing the Fire Department. The city bands together the top group of scores and then permits discretionary hiring anywhere within that band. "Under the consent decree," Cooper said, "what the city did, within the band, was to select minorities and women first." White men in the band were then selected according to the order of their scores, and, after those scores ran out, the city slid the band down and started again with minorities and women. Promotions were handled the same way.

This created a lot of angry white male firefighters. One of them, Ray Batz, retired from the force and went to work for Californians Against Discrimination and Preferences—a grass-roots group of Proposition 209 supporters. In December, Batz invited me to lunch with some of his disaffected colleagues at Fior D'Italia, in North Beach, which claims to be America's oldest Italian restaurant. Fior D'Italia, it turns out, is a kind of Stonewall Inn for the foes of affirmative action. Its principal owner, Bob Larive, is an exuberant Republican, whose generous contributions to the Prop. 209 campaign caused his restaurant to be picketed. He greeted the firefighters with a free round of drinks at a bar festooned with anti-Clinton stickers, and offered to pay for a series of ads on local talk radio inviting people who know about violations of Proposition 209 to call a toll-free number.

We settled into a private room, and, over Cinzano and pasta, Batz argued that the rush to hire women and minorities had compromised safety in the department. "We have work avoidance, we have chore inability, we have dropped ladders," he said. "For the first time in my career, I dropped a fifty-foot ladder, because this tiny little woman came up who I'd never met before, and at the worst possible moment she bailed out. This woman weighed a hundred and twelve pounds, and we hired her when she was forty. You can't hire forty-year-old *men* to be firefighters. When I

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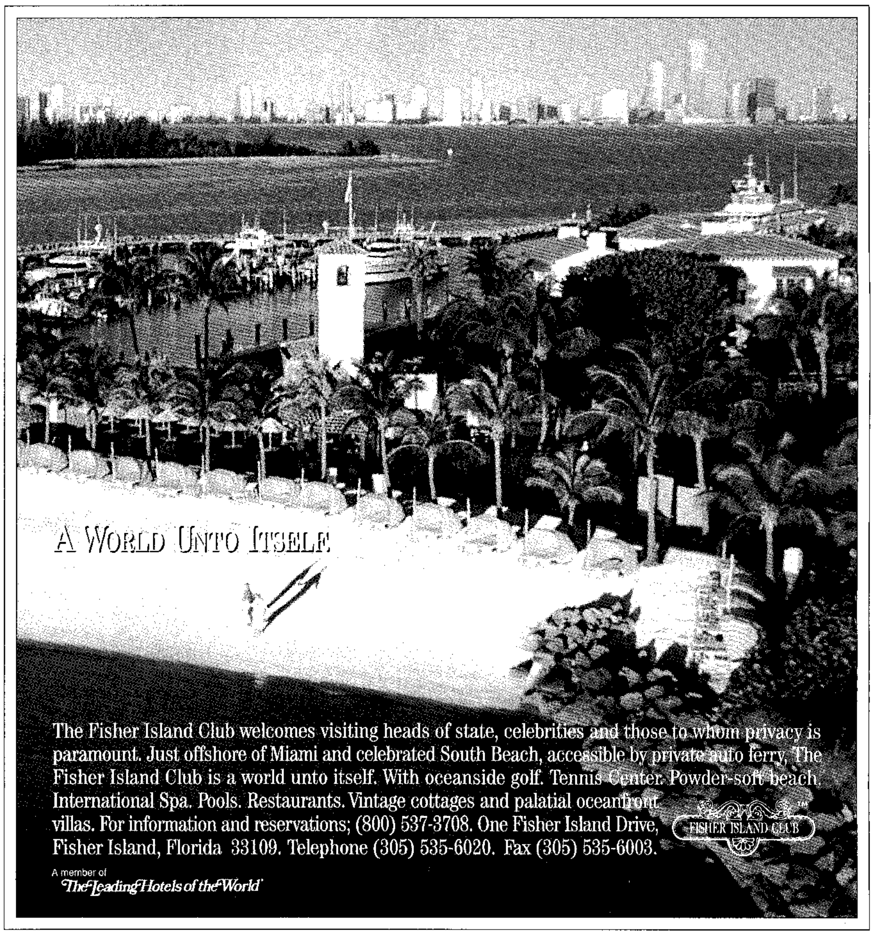

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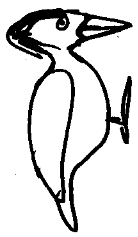
came in, you couldn’t be over thirty-two.”

Between 1993 and 1996, Batz continued, the department suffered two deaths. One of them, he claimed, involved a firefighter who “was given the job on the basis of his blackness, and two to three years later he was given a lieutenancy on the basis of his blackness.” According to Batz, the lieutenant “broke three of the cardinal rules when you show up at a fire: his turnout coat was wide open, his gloves were not on, and he stood upright. He was hit by a backdraft, probably two thousand degrees Fahrenheit. He didn’t know what he was doing, and he essentially killed himself.”



I confessed that I was skeptical about whether one’s score on a written exam was an accurate predictor of one’s performance as a firefighter. But the firefighters energetically defended the tests. “They are extremely job-related,” said a twenty-year veteran, who asked me not to use his name. “They used to range from the use of ladders to water supply to distinguishing between one nozzle and another. When I first applied to be a firefighter, I put together a study group in my home, and we started studying a year and a half prior to the examinations.” In 1990, when it came time to take an exam for promotion, the tests had been watered down so much that, he said, “I studied three hours for one and one week for the other—it was that meaningless.”

The soft-spoken chief of the San Francisco Fire Department, Robert L. Demmons, is an African-American committed to diversity in the ranks. When I repeated the white firefighters’ charges, he paused to collect himself before replying. Then he said, with still scarcely controlled fury, “What that speaks to me of is *racial supremacy*. One African-American gets killed on the job and all of a sudden it’s because the standards were lowered to get in. This was one of the most capable individuals that I’ve seen in my career in this department.”

Regaining his composure, Demmons told me his own story. In the nineteen-seventies, he took entrance and promotional tests that, he later heard through the grapevine, had repeat questions, whose answers were leaked to white firefighters through the old-boy network. As head of the black firefighters’ association, he had challenged the tests as racially discriminatory, and that challenge led to the adoption of the consent decree. But, now that the decree has expired, Demmons is concerned that Proposition 209 will make it impossible for the department to maintain its current proportion of women and minorities, who continue to get lower test scores. In response to Proposition 209, Demmons’s staff has drafted a plan that would deëmphasize written exams.

“Let’s just face the real fact,” Demmons said confidingly. “What does the job of firefighter require? Are we talking about a nuclear physicist?” According to a draft of Demmons’s plan, which is still being revised, each of the projected twenty thousand applicants to the Fire Department each year would be invited to join an unpaid “cadet program.” Admission would be determined by demonstrating minimum competency on a written reading-comprehension exam, tentatively to be scored on a pass/fail basis. Candidates who passed the written exam would progress to an oral interview and a physical test, and then attend a series of training classes. Department officials would have tremendous discretion to choose among the cadets, on the basis of such vague criteria as “interest in firefighting and commitment to the department.”

I asked Mayor Brown, too, about the angry white firefighters who maintained that the new recruits couldn’t tell the difference between one nozzle and another and had endangered their colleagues by calling for the wrong hose. “Tests are basically unfair,” the Mayor said, with some passion. “If you’ve not been part of the mainstream culture, a test cannot effectively measure your level of ability, skill, and intellect. It would be like me taking a test in Beijing.” Brown energetically defended Chief Demmons’s proposal to eliminate ranked written tests. “Everybody ought to be able to follow the same nozzle process,” he declared. “But you’re talking about a kid who comes from a different culture. He won’t know what the hell you’re talking about when you say ‘nozzle.’ ”

IT will be ironic if Proposition 209 results in the abolition of civil-service exams, which were adopted during the Progressive era to insure that public-sector jobs were allocated on the basis of merit rather than of patronage. Theodore Roosevelt, as the president of the New York City Board of Police Commissioners in the eighteen-nineties, championed civil-service exams as a way of replacing the corruption and inefficiency of the patronage system with scientific expertise. The exams, of course, weren't popular with ethnic groups that had cornered the patronage market. In a 1992 book entitled "The Rascal King" Jack Beatty describes how James Michael Curley, the future mayor of Boston, was sent to jail in 1904 for taking the civil-service exam for a less academically gifted countryman. This didn't hurt Curley's standing among his Irish constituents, who were convinced that the tests were designed to keep the Irish down. The criticism of standardized tests which has accompanied the passage of Proposition 209, in other words, eerily echoes the arguments made by Irish defenders of patronage in the late nineteenth century.

It's not clear that a fire department should be designed to "reflect the demographics and cultural diversity of San Francisco," as Demmons's draft proposal puts it, rather than simply to put out fires. Even those who are generally skeptical of affirmative action, however, concede that the case for diversity is strongest in law enforcement, which may therefore become the fiercest battleground as a result of the passage of Proposition 209. "My major reservation about 209 was the effect it might have on police departments," says James Q. Wilson, who teaches at U.C.L.A. and is the nation's leading scholar of policing. "People think of the police department as having partly a professional function and partly a political role. I think it's harder for an all-white police department to patrol an all-black neighborhood."

A series of lawsuits beginning in the nineteen-seventies produced consent decrees that set goals for the Los Angeles Police Department to hire and promote minorities in proportion to their numbers in applicant pools. In 1994, several groups, including the Los Angeles office of the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense Fund, led by Bill Lann Lee (who is now President Clinton's Acting Assistant At-

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torney General for Civil Rights), initiated a lawsuit alleging that women police officers were victims of sex discrimination and sexual harassment. In the fall of 1996, Lee and his colleagues and the Los Angeles City Council agreed to a new consent decree, which would include women in the promotion goals already set for minorities and establish a new goal to hire women in proportion to their numbers in the civilian workforce. Almost half the Los Angeles civilian workforce is female, whereas only about a quarter of L.A.P.D. applicants are women.

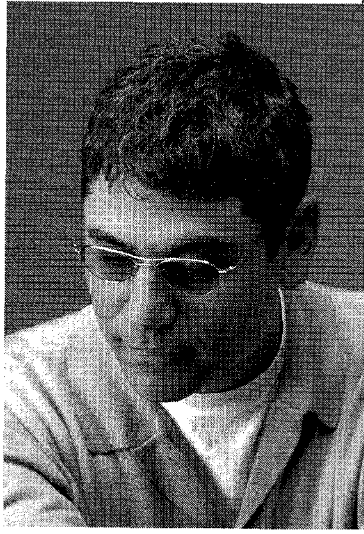
On Election Day for Proposition 209, Lee and his colleagues tried to persuade an L.A. magistrate to endorse the consent decree, a move that would have locked the city into hiring goals for eighteen years. The race to get the papers signed before the ballots were counted looked suspiciously like an attempt to make an end run around Proposition 209. In any event, the plan failed, because a federal district judge, William Keller, got wind of it, reasserted jurisdiction over the case, and postponed a decision on the decree.

Once the old consent decrees expire, however, the L.A.P.D.'s hiring and promotions may well be carried out according to Prop. 209. Because a predominantly white and male police force is now unthinkable, the Los Angeles force may well take its lead from other departments that have deëmphasized written exams. The Oakland Police Department, for example, gives its chief wide discretion to hire and promote on the basis of leadership potential, and the Baltimore police force recruits and trains young men and women from historically black colleges. But L.A. should try to avoid the example of Washington, D.C., which lowered the minimum score on its entrance exam from seventy to fifty per cent in the early nineteen-eighties, in order to increase the recruiting pool, after the city council required that all new police hires be District residents. In 1989, Congress increased the pressure, threatening to withhold federal funds unless the District hired eighteen hundred new recruits. According to the Washington *Post*, the new recruits were widely perceived as a disaster—many lacked the basic skills necessary to serve as competent witnesses or fill out arrest reports—and, in 1993, in response to public outcry, the District restored its seventy-per-cent passing score.

AFTER you've spent some time in California, it's hard not to be skeptical of the passionate certainty on both sides of the affirmative-action debate. But, in the light of California's response to Proposition 209, even those who are ambivalent about affirmative action may be more inclined to support its continuation on pragmatic grounds. Without a serious effort to close the score gaps, the alternative to affirmative action—a wholesale assault on objective standards of merit—seems far worse.

At the very least, as the Supreme Court held in the Bakke decision of 1978, perhaps universities should be allowed more discretion than other public institutions in matters of race. In a brief filed last October in the Supreme Court case of Piscataway v. Taxman, three University of Texas law professors urged the court to preserve affirmative action in higher education for entirely practical reasons, and they predicted, with cool-eyed accuracy, the unintended consequences of a color-blind world. "If affirmative action is ended, inevitable political, economic, and legal forces will pressure the great public universities to lower admissions standards as far as necessary to avoid resegregation," the professors warned. "Barring a miraculous improvement in elementary and secondary education for minority students, color-blind admissions will soon produce either public universities without competitive admissions, public universities without adequate funds, or both. Either way, the end of affirmative action is a formula for the destruction of the great public universities." The University of California's reaction to Proposition 209 is already confirming the professors' fears, and California's experience is a harbinger of what the rest of the country can expect if the Supreme Court or Congress eliminates affirmative action on a national scale.

"Whether you're a liberal or a conservative on this issue, in some ways I'm sorry that affirmative action ended," John Yoo confessed to me. "Once you start telling people that merit doesn't matter when they're at the formative stages of their careers, I think you do long and lasting damage to America." He added quietly, "I don't think people outside California realize it, but that's the next big fight, and it's going on right now." ♦



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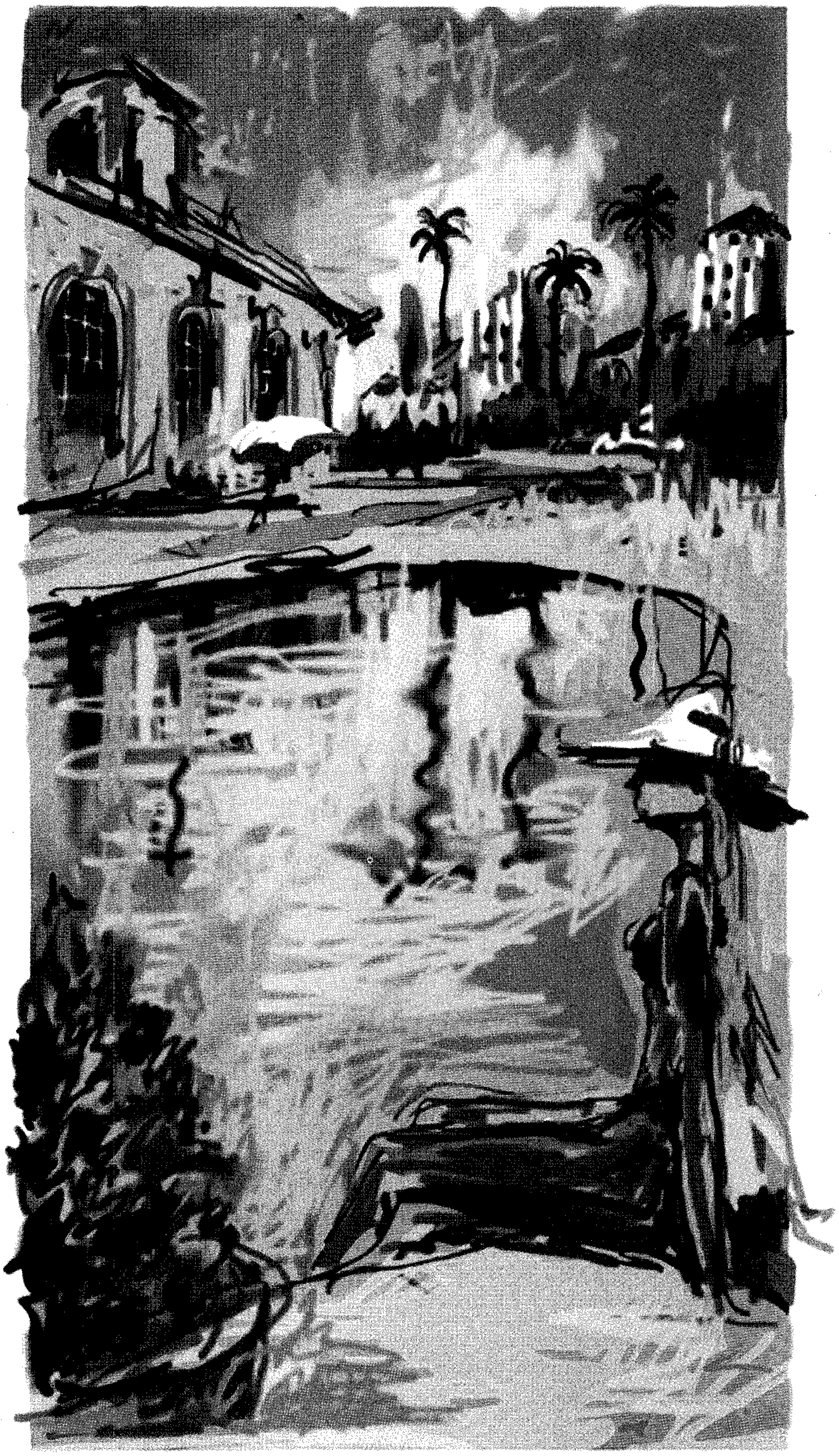

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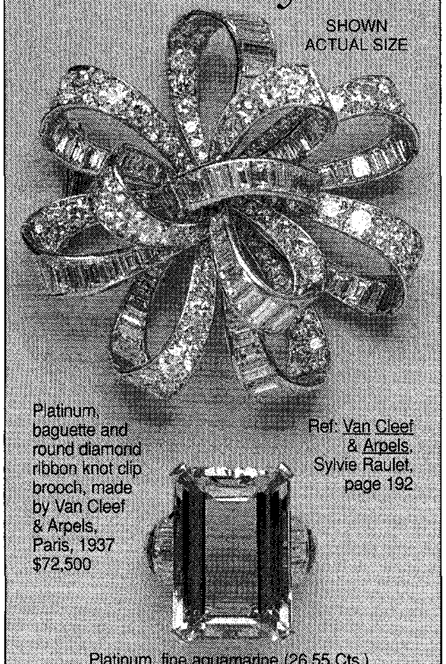

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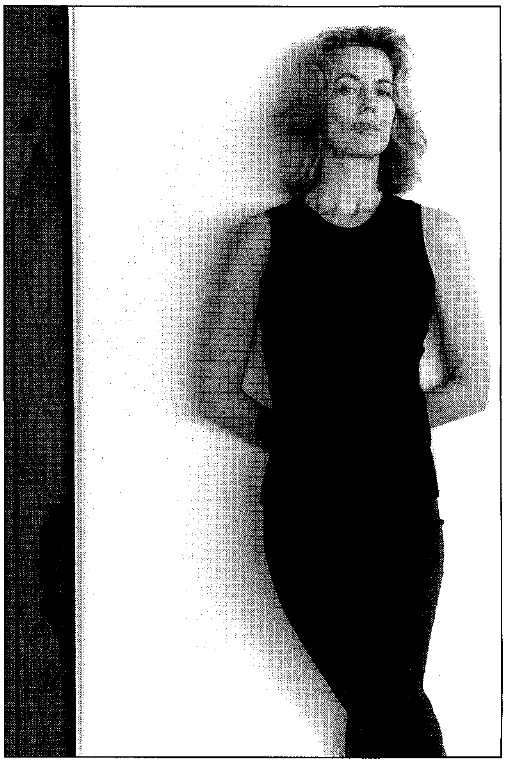
PERSONAL HISTORY

DARING ALL

Coming of age in a string of B movies.

BY FIONA LEWIS

When I arrived in Los Angeles, from London, in the early seventies, my expectations for self-aggrandizement and success were ludicrously overblown. In that way, I was no different from any other young girl arriving in L.A., stepping down, dewy and wide-eyed, from a Greyhound bus. In my case, though, my innate Englishness gave me a leg up. My nasal twang, my manufactured jaw-locked yap, placed me firmly among the British upper classes, something I knew would facilitate my entry. To be honest, my origins were respectable middle class, and were not particularly enhanced by my brief and second-rate convent education, where my margin of expertise lay narrowly between riding sidesaddle and the ability to sink to floor level while demonstrating the formal curtsy. This latter accomplishment was for the unlikely event of my being presented at the palace to Her Majesty the Queen. It was the delirious notion of arriviste grandeur: my schoolmates considered learning to be a débutante the summit of a first-rate education. This was never questioned by our hardworking lawyer, doctor, and dentist parents. After all, we were only girls. Unencumbered by too many hard facts, I slipped into modelling and acting, with the same precocious, if untalented, adroitness with which I had sashayed across the gymnasium floor during Friday-afternoon cha-cha lessons. The story of my rise to semi-fame is simply this: It was not so demanding to be a film actress in London in the sixties. I was willing to take my clothes off. Unimaginable now as a recipe for success, in those days nudity was practically a requirement. Besides, Glenda Jackson, our own Sarah Bernhardt, was also willing to take it all off.



Lewis today: "The story of my rise to semi-fame is simply this: I was willing to take my clothes off."

ART LINSON

In Los Angeles, Cary Grant was my first date. I exaggerate slightly to make a point. A journalist acquaintance of mine, a friend of the actor's, had given me the phone number, and, soon after my arrival, I called him up. I was newly installed in a rented bungalow in West Hollywood. It was a brown-smeared nineteen-twenties wooden hovel with romantic overtones. It boasted a lanai. In the back yard, palm trees rustled above a scorched lawn. Tropical semi-splendor, sun, and cloudless skies: compared with gray London, a sense of lushness and liberty. In my VW of an indeterminate color, with the Beach Boys for my serenade, I drove the freeways (empty then), unlike a Joan Didion character—in celebration, not despair.

My ferociously proper speech seemed to assure respectability. Via a servant, I was connected immediately with the star. Mr. Grant's inimitable clipped voice uttered my name: "Fe-o-na." He suggested cocktails at his place. He lived in what seemed a rather modest but cozy house. I remember white-latticed windows, but this detail may be altogether too wistful. We sat out on a front patio on wooden chaises longues and drank Scotch. White-haired, evenly tanned, wearing pressed gray slacks and a sports shirt, he exuded a reflective heartiness. He was still extremely handsome, and was surprisingly angry—the anger barely camouflaged behind what appeared to be a disappointingly avuncular concern—to find out that I was an actress. A few days later, I flew with him to Catalina Island. Jennifer, his very young daughter by the actress Dyan Cannon—from whom he was divorced—and a nanny went with us. In a rented sedan, we drove around the island, pulling off the road now and again to admire the view. It was fine weather, and the Pacific Ocean was dazzling, but I spent the entire day defending myself and my profession. For Mr. Grant, everything attached to the entertainment business was an atrocious waste of time. Peevishly at first and then with soul-stirring regret, he informed me that his own career would have been better spent rearing children. The film industry was a sham. Movies left him cold. And why, stubborn young girl that I was, couldn't I see this? As Jennifer gambolled in the undergrowth, the fearful subject was worn to shreds.

Two days later, he called me up to ask me to go bowling—again, with his daughter. I admitted that I was unfamiliar with the sport. A lengthy silence. Suddenly, I realized that it was not necessarily he but Jennifer who required a date—or perhaps a mother figure. It was clear that as an ambitious actress, one who definitely did not bowl, I was a non-starter.

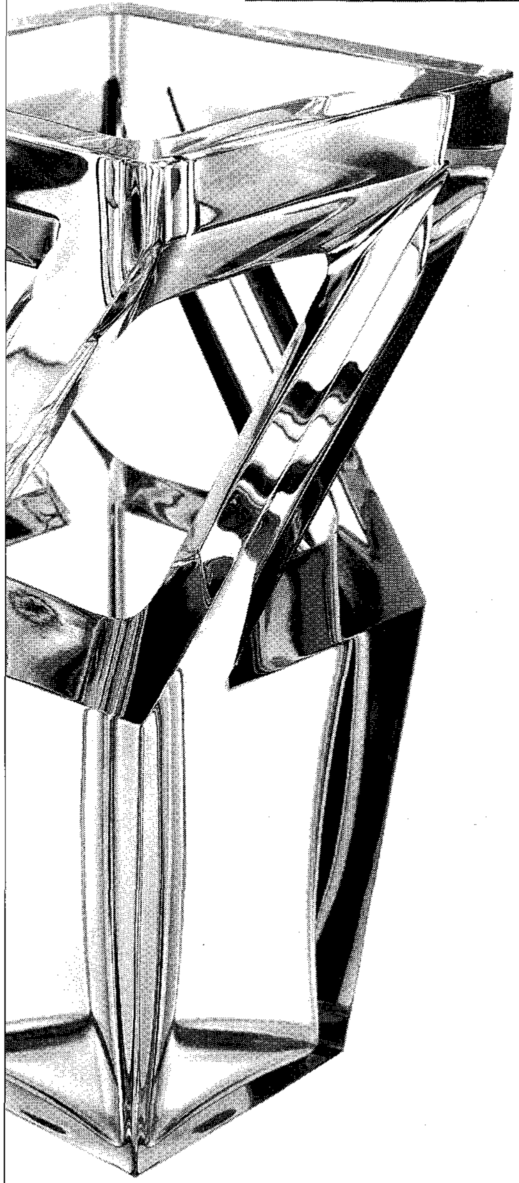
In the seventies in Los Angeles, there was an ambience of adventure in the movie business—a kind of Barnum & Bailey, have-a-go spirit that has long since disappeared. Dapper luminaries like Don Simpson and Bob Evans worked alongside ex-car salesmen and celebrity hairdressers. A hint of derring-do was qualification enough. This led to some truly terrible movies. I was in several of them.

I had never taken acting classes, except for one day I spent at the Actors Studio in London, where, in stultified bliss, nostrils dilated, arms flapping, I performed an exercise in becoming a tree. Then, shimmying across the dance floor of the Ad Lib club one night in London, I was selected by Roman Polanski to play the bawdy maid in his film "The Fearless Vampire Killers, or Pardon Me, but Your Teeth Are in My Neck." It was a relatively undemanding part, in which, while spilling out of my plunging fichued gown, I was bitten to death. After this, I was in show business.

Still a minor celebrity in England (my farinaceous colleen face had appeared on the covers of several magazines), I had not been counting on quite so much competition when I arrived in Los Angeles. Around this time was emerging the now totally commonplace idea that every pleasant-looking girl in America could have a crack at the movies. Suddenly, California was overflowing with fresh female talent, all armed with dog-eared copies of "The Joy of Sex" and "An Actor Prepares."

One day, I was taken to see Dino De Laurentiis. His vast offices, on Canon Drive, bespoke herculean success. There had been wild rumors of tax problems, of bagmen absconding by night across the Italian border with lira-packed suitcases, but this only added to his flamboyant reputation. Diminutive, sharp-suited Dino, a smiling Il Duce, was only half visible behind an acre or two of black-leather-topped desk. With one finger twirling above his lightly pomaded head, he asked me to turn—"*Girati*"—and to walk up and down on his impressive Persian rug: "*Per favore . . . va, va.*" In those days, this was not considered the least bit offensive. Besides, a few years earlier I had endured far worse from the director Ken Russell, a sadist of unimaginable charm. I played Mrs. Liszt in "Lisztomania," now considered a semi-pornographic film, and survived swinging naked from a chandelier with Roger Daltrey while successfully thwarting the director's attempts to reduce me to tears.

By comparison, Dino seemed positively gallant. He pondered momentarily, then nodded: "*Va bene.*" That was it. Fortunately, my acting ability was of



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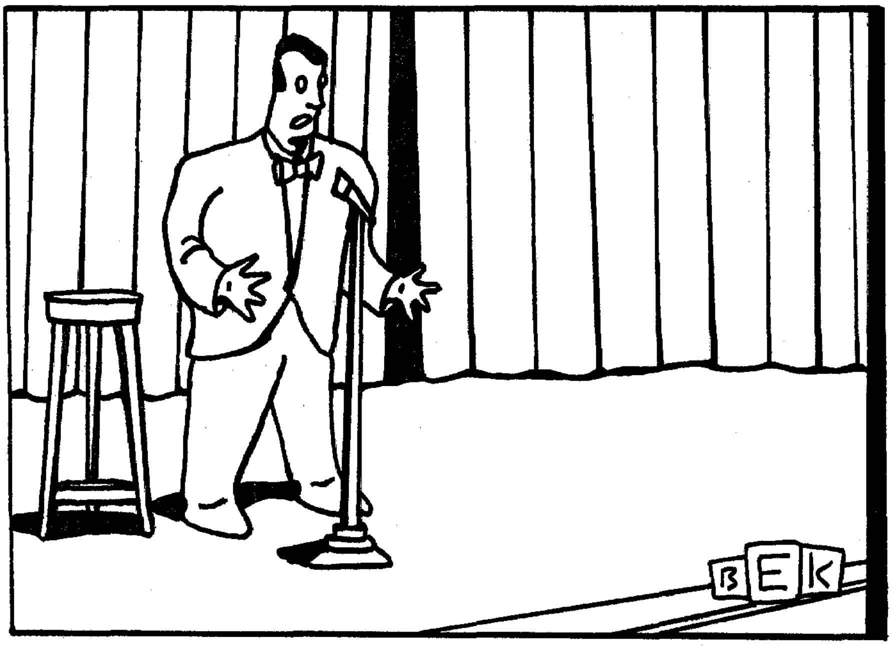


"I just flew in from the Coast. Boy, are my references tired."

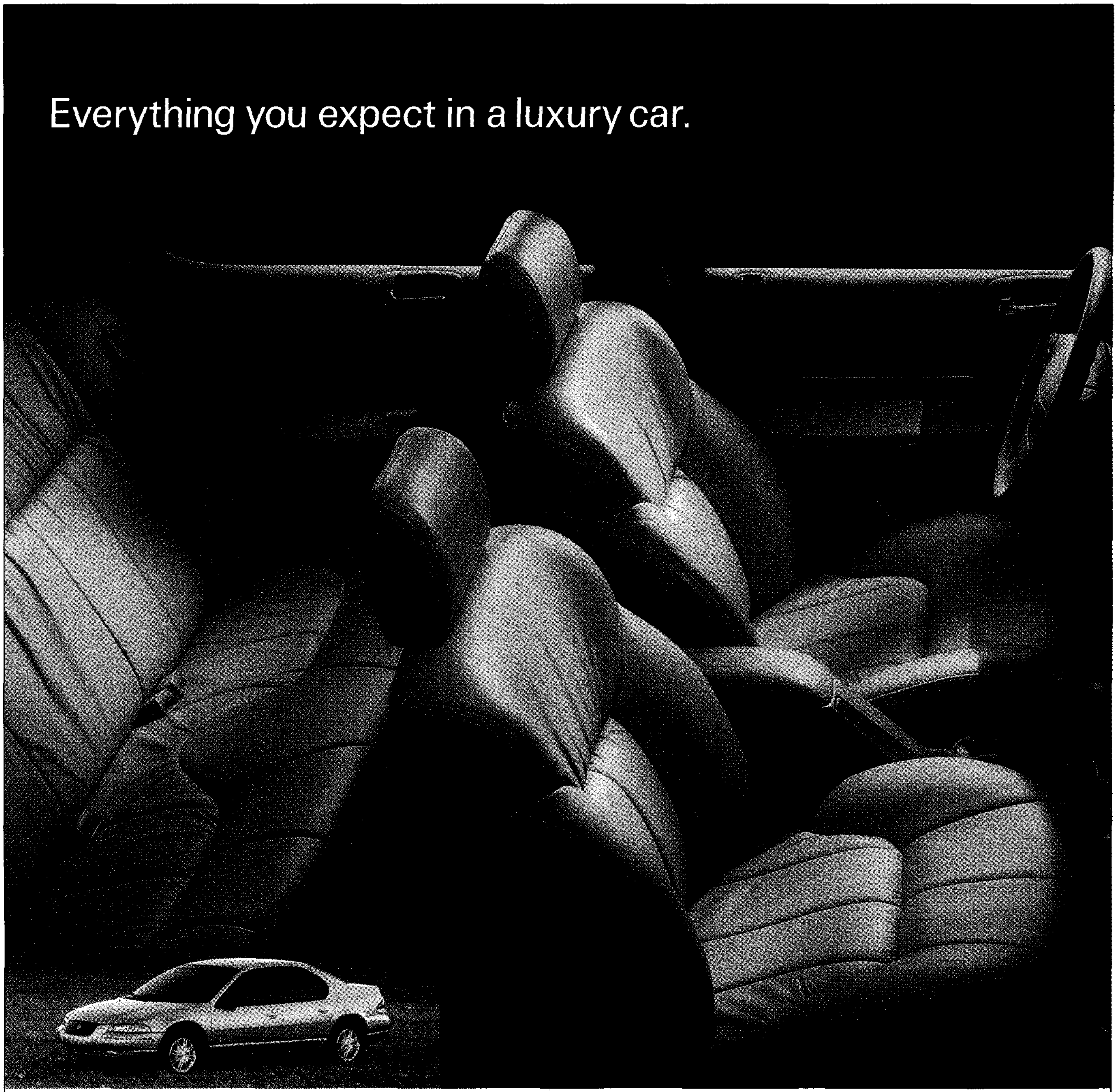
• •

very little concern. I had the job: one of the female leads in the epic production "Drum," the sequel to "Mandingo," a cautionary tale about a slave-breeding plantation in 1840—two hours jam-packed with sadism, depravity, and melodrama. "Drum" was more of the same, if slightly worse, with a rather morbid emphasis on castration and with continuous references—"snake," "tassel," "thing"—to male genitalia. I can't remember many of the details, but I can still see myself, alongside Warren Oates, holding up a ton of cream-colored crinoline under a sweltering Baton Rouge sky. "Mr. Maxwell, you are crude, *crude,*" I squeakily exclaim. "One thing I will *not* stand for is intercourse between slaves inside the house." To this Warren chummily replies, "Their sap is risin'. If I don't give 'em wenches, they gonna be after white ladies—then I gotta castrate them." There is more steaminess and skirt rustling upstairs on the landing as I reprimand Ken Norton, the household's sullen, bare-chested buck: "Drum, you fetch yo master. You tell him this place is a pigsty. Now go, git." Next, in a most Southern manner, I appear languishing naked in a tin bathtub. And, finally, after the bloody slave revolt, and after Norton has relieved the white villain of his testicles, I lie grime-smeared, prostrate, on a barn floor, while behind me a torrent of orange flame—Dino's version of Atlanta—rises into the night sky.

I did several movies after "Drum," including a Mexican version of "Jaws"—"Tintorera"—which involved four weeks of frolicking on the beach at Cancún. Being a proficient swimmer, I stunned our director by remaining upside down underwater for almost two minutes, thin legs thrashing, in order to simulate being attacked by the man-eating shark. Then I made the inevitable move into low-budget horror films. (Some years later, I was applauded by the cult magazine *Fangoria* for my roles in "Dr. Phibes Rises Again," with Vincent Price, and a 1973 version of "Dracula," with Jack Palance, a method actor of such devotion that when he bit my neck I was immediately taken to the hospital.) I did Michael Laughlin's "Strange Behavior," in which I played a diabolical scientist. Here I had the novel experience of being fully dressed—the lab coat replacing the push-up bra—as a member of a team whose goal was to turn innocent teenagers into homicidal zombies: a sort of Hardy Boys go to Hell. My lines were statically menacing. "Lie still. This will only hurt for a moment," I would murmur, a jumbo hypodermic in hand. In the sequel, "Strange Invaders," I played an alien who, daintily disguised as an Avon lady, preys upon the residents of a small town, a current of molten green lava bubbling beneath my replicant skin, which before the film's dénouement spectacularly exploded, a geyser of ooze, as I screamed myself to sci-fi death.

The truth is, barring the screaming, I wasn't very good. My enthusiasm usually outflanked my ability. Also, my dubious talent for stripping onscreen was starting to feel lewdly out of place in Los Angeles, a town that, despite its very original vulgarity, is suburban in outlook. Around 1975, I became susceptible to the voguish feminist rhetoric regarding beauty: that to be admired solely for one's looks was a shameful reliance on a woman's weakest asset, freezing the use of her meagre brains.

Perhaps this accounted for my fierce attraction to writers. During the seventies, I had liaisons with at least four, under the false impression that alongside these soi-disant pioneers of truth and sensibility I would be allowed to unveil my secret intellectual self. (Forgive me—I was still in my twenties.) One of the reasons I came to Los Angeles was to be with a writer. I admit this now, though at the time I thought I was simply concentrating on my inalienable right to pursue Pleasure, Freedom, and a Career. I shared my West Hollywood shack with John, a young screenwriter from Chicago. I had met him in the South of France one summer at Tony Richardson's house. He was there working on a movie for the director. What I liked was his thorough Americanness, his driving enthusiasm. For, although I was superficially boisterous, I had doubts. My clothes, for example, said it all. When not shrouded in my "Death on the Nile" satins, or Biba pajama pants and suicidally brick-high sandals, I wore natty men's suits: black, pin-striped, and accessorized with a Fair Isle sweater and my father's tweed flat cap. These were disguises for the flamboyantly insecure. John encouraged my deliverance. I am looking at a snapshot of myself from that era: I am seated in a wicker chair, on our front porch, under a halo of wind chimes, squinting blissfully, minus my kohl-smudged panda eyes, and wearing a No. 60 football shirt, embroidered jeans, and sneakers. It is the giddy look of fake innocence, the uncharted hippie *angoisse* of one barely



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afloat. But John had me tamed: he introduced me to depth charges (a shot glass of whiskey dropped in a glass of beer); to Pink's hot dogs; to Dan Tana's; to the Lakers; to Gladys Knight and the Pips. He also encouraged me to try to become a writer.

We had a casual relationship—not unpassionate but oddly at arm's length. Fidelity was not a requirement in those days; rather, not to sleep with whom you pleased was considered hypocritical. But our relationship ended on the first day of his directorial début, when, unimaginatively, he seduced his leading lady. Crushed, I consumed several depth charges, plus a dangerous quantity of Rorer 714 Quaaludes (easily obtained from my Beverly Hills doctor), and soggily offered myself to his best friend—a writer, naturally.

A lot has been said about the paganish indulgences of those times, in which rebellious middle-class girls like me, eager to shock, lay around all day lost in ecstatic, misty-minded contemplation, or with wordless complicity indulged in some anonymous maximum-voltage fuck. All these things are true. But I have to say that, personally, while not excusing any of this peculiar behavior, I was just looking for romance, as I secretly suspect was every other girl I met in Los Angeles.

I LOVED Los Angeles and avoided my English contemporaries as much as possible. Despite the collapsing economy back home, the I.R.A. bombs, and the attempted kidnappings, they arrived smiling their colonially superior smiles—the Happy Valley crowd of boozy Hooray Henrys looking for unsupervised California pleasure while clinging to their Fortnum & Mason tea, their steak-and-kidney-pud dinner parties, their cricket matches in Griffith Park. I did, however, spend a lot of time at the home of Tony Richardson, where I met writers Nos. 2 and 4. For me, it was the cultural center of Los Angeles. I was attracted to drama, and Tony was famous for it. Lanky, slope-shouldered, inexhaustible, like a giant treetop bird, he had a beaky face, one eyebrow permanently raised in anticipation of some diverting catastrophe. He worshipped California. He lived above the Sunset Strip, in a Tudorish ranch house on a two-and-a-half-acre plot—a semi-exotic wonderland of winding paths flanked by orchids, citrus trees, palms, and eucalyptus.

Tony's lunch and dinner parties attracted sportsmen, riffraff, and extraordinary talent: Peter Hall, Jeanne Moreau, Laurence Olivier, Buck Henry, Jack Nicholson, Christopher Isherwood, Jessica Mitford, John Mortimer, David Hockney. Politics was represented at both ends of the spectrum—from Edward Heath to an old girlfriend of Henry Kissinger's, who, I remember, told us that a few years earlier she had informed Henry that she refused to sleep with him again unless he stopped the war in Vietnam.

As a showman, Tony was hilarious, compelling, intelligent. Mealtimes were explosions of wit and terror, with arguments intentionally provoked by him, and prefaced with the exclamation "Oh, dear me, you're all so *dreadfully* sad." But he was also loyal, and loyalty meant a great deal to someone as unfettered as I was. In London in 1972, I had just started working on a Lindsay Anderson movie called "O Lucky Man!," a rambling "Candide"-inspired tale, in which Malcolm McDowell at one point encounters a man whose head has been grafted to a pig's body. One afternoon, the producer called me into his office to inform me that my presence was no longer required. Actually, this simple message took a surrealistically painful hour to deliver. It seems I must have mentioned this bone-crushing experience to Tony. One evening I went to his house and his old friend Lindsay was there. After dinner, during a heated discussion on socialism, Tony, assuming his steely top-of-the-turret look, suddenly turned to Lindsay and said, "You have absolutely *no* taste. Not a *clue*. You are *ridiculous*. Anyone who knew anything would not have fired Fiona from his movie." Silenced, Lindsay sank into his paisley floor cushion, and there he remained, crumpled and mute, to receive a further ten minutes of Tony's hailstorm abuse.

FOR a considerable sum, I posed for *Playboy*. Airbrushed and Vaselined, I wore the expression of a surprised poodle, reclining languorously on a pink velvet divan. The theme was Victorian: potted palms and a piano shawl, its weedlike fringe chastely draped across my loins. Men friends regarded this display either as an automatic invitation or with puritanical solemnity—a nice English girl like me, once engaged to an earl! (I played up this aspect considerably in the interview. In reality, I was broke.)

At some point, I found that my acting career was progressing in exact ratio to my inability to write. Introspection, at that time unfamiliar to the English, suddenly loomed before me. Driving along the freeways on a cloudless day, my own shallowness would rise up to greet me. My wish was to be good at something; I searched for clues. Christopher Isherwood once told me that writers need to be soft people with a hard core. He owned a heavenly sunlit house in Santa Monica Canyon overlooking the beach. I can see him now, in his kitchen, in a beige dressing gown, peering at me with his gentle field-mouse eyes. A touch under the weather, he was making a cup of tea. It was then that I understood: real writers wrote every day.

By 1977, I had made a few forays into journalism, freelancing for the Los Angeles *Times*. At first I did this in the same way that I did everything else—impudently, somewhat carelessly. I interviewed people I knew. I once buttonholed the actor Oliver Reed, with whom I had starred in a mortifyingly atrocious film (sacrificial rites, nudity). We met early one afternoon in the Beverly Wilshire Hotel bar, among a genteel scattering of ladies cushioned by shopping bags. Oliver arrived with Keith Moon, and ordered and consumed an astonishing number of cocktails. The interview proceeded haltingly and was finally cut short when Oliver and Keith got up, stood on the table, and dropped their pants. Though I should have been dismayed, I was delighted.

In between writing assignments and unsatisfactory affairs with writers, I hung out with the girls: women also negotiating the end of their twenties, who, on the outside, suggested an independence that might not be tamed. My friend Michele was a producer. Lynne was a screenwriter. She liked to say that being kissed at the end of a studio

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pitch meeting indicated a failure to get the job. Joanna was an actress, more determined than I was: the Amazon type, a fearless girl who would have made it out West in a covered wagon. She and I went to parties, to discos—the Daisy, the Élysée—with Rod Stewart's "Tonight's the Night" exploding on the sound system. In bathrooms—people lived in bathrooms—we fed ourselves little pills, smoked, drank, swinging our bare legs as we perched on countertops in our black Halston copies, taking a breather from the sharpies and the polyester-shirted loungers outside.

With Lynne, my nocturnal program often included visits to Pamela Mason, James Mason's ex-wife. A sirenic tippler of great exuberance and wit, she lived with her daughter, our friend Portland, in a mausoleum-like mansion, with marble pillars in a great hall. Vodka in hand, her auburn wig slightly askew, Pamela told us Hollywood stories: of Richard Burton, who, while naked in bed one night (he invariably smelled of mutton, she claimed), abruptly interrupted their lovemaking to discuss his role in Hamlet; of Clark Gable's extraordinarily large head; of her own notoriety. There had been a report on television that J.F.K. had been caught in a closet at Gary Cooper's house with a British actor's wife. Pamela was named. Instead of suing, she was delighted. "I'm thrilled," she said. "Actually, he's one of the ones I didn't have."

Exhibitionists, we danced mainly with (and for) each other. We cavorted onstage at the Seven Seas—an old Hawaiian cabaret bar on Hollywood Boulevard—much to the confusion of the fire-eating cabaret performers. At the Hofbrau, downtown, we did the polka for the local boys, accompanied by a twenty-piece band in lederhosen. Cocktails—Manhattans, Greyhounds, mai tais—were imperative and drugs were easy to come by. One night, lounging on a sofa at On the Rox with my friend Susanna, who read scripts for Jack Nicholson, we were offered cocaine by a visiting Rolling Stone. Eel-thin, he was snazzily attired in fringed white buckskin and turquoise jewelry—a pale-faced Geronimo. When Susanna and I declined, both claiming sore throats, he coolly suggested that, to facilitate matters, it might be inserted (with or without his help, that was never clear) "up our arses."

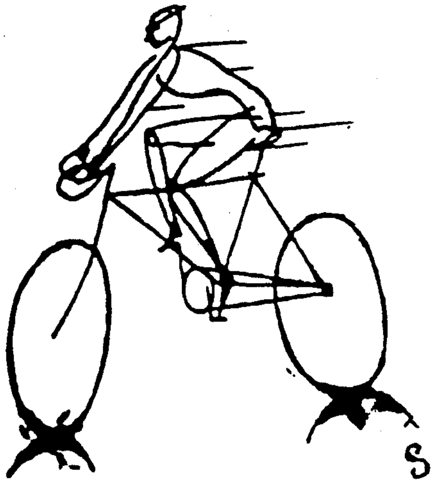
I did not care much for cocaine. I already saw everything too clearly, and—excuse me if I sound maudlin—felt too much. What became oppressive was the repetition, the appalling monotony of it all. Our preoccupation with sex had turned us into something close to performing seals. Customarily anesthetized, I thought that there was a depressing business-as-usual feeling about it, and nothing erotic to speak of.

By now, it had dawned on us girls that our old notion of obtaining our freedom through sex was a sham. Promiscuity actually made us feel weaker. We were fascinated, for instance, by the fact that after a dinner party the hostess would get a thank-you call from an admirer, whereas after sex she often got nothing at all. And our merely expecting that phone call meant that the casual one-night stand could never make a woman happy. Twenty years ago, this seemed like a revelation.

WRITER No. 4 I will call Douglas. We had met at Tony's, over a spirited conversation about Jimmy Carter. I was still clinging to the idea that brains and beauty were incompatible, so I talked non-stop.

Imagine a modern house high above Los Angeles. Douglas is not writing, because he is often blocked, and therefore late mornings are spent breakfasting at Schwab's drugstore, where I am addicted to the hash browns and to Betty, our pink-uniformed, pin-curled waitress, whose mountain-peak lipstick grazes her powdered nostrils.

As a comedian and a screenwriter, Douglas spends a considerable amount of time in New York. One day, he arrives home to find his bachelor terrace, his former flinty promontory, planted as an English garden. A riot of flowers and blooming shrubs from here to there. "Surprise!" I say. But the suburban spectacle leaves him cold. He is horrified.



His look said it all. Sometimes nothing more is required to provoke a moment of startling insight. I remember the fizzing blue sky, roses, nasturtiums, all in miniature—a blooming voyage taking me away from all those men with whom I could not be myself. I decided to end my infatuation with writers.

My next—and, thank goodness, almost my last—acting attempt followed soon after the breakup. "The Fury" was a thriller, a flashy terrorist yarn of psychic horror, with nudity and oceans of blood. I was a prime candidate. It was by now the late seventies, and I had been initially uninterested in the role, which involved being spun from the ceiling at supernatural speed, my eye sockets exploding. But Sue Mengers, the best and most outrageous agent in Hollywood, set me straight. "Look, dear, you should be so lucky," she said, her unmistakable raunchy voice echoing through the wires. "Where are you going to get arrested these days? This is Brian De Palma. Do you or don't you want to be a goddam star?" One vivid image from "The Fury" is still with me: John Cassavetes and I, too bloody and dripping to show ourselves for lunch in the commissary, eating chicken salad on an empty stage. "Well," he said to me, "aren't you glad you didn't bother taking acting classes?"

The movie featured a particularly gruesome sex scene, which was later cut, apparently because it looked too disturbing. Too disturbing: surely a thank-you to a kind editor is in order here. I am distressed to say, however, that still photographs from the omitted scene turned up years later, after I had spent ten years as a screenwriter and had written my first novel, and some sort of respectability was finally within my grasp. I was giving a reading in a Los Angeles bookstore. There were the usual oddities seated in the front row—in particular, a man in house slippers and a soiled raincoat. After a scattering of polite applause, the man held up not a copy of my book to sign but a blowup of me naked, wide-eyed, and, of course, screaming. Whether I liked it or not, I was still in show business. ♦

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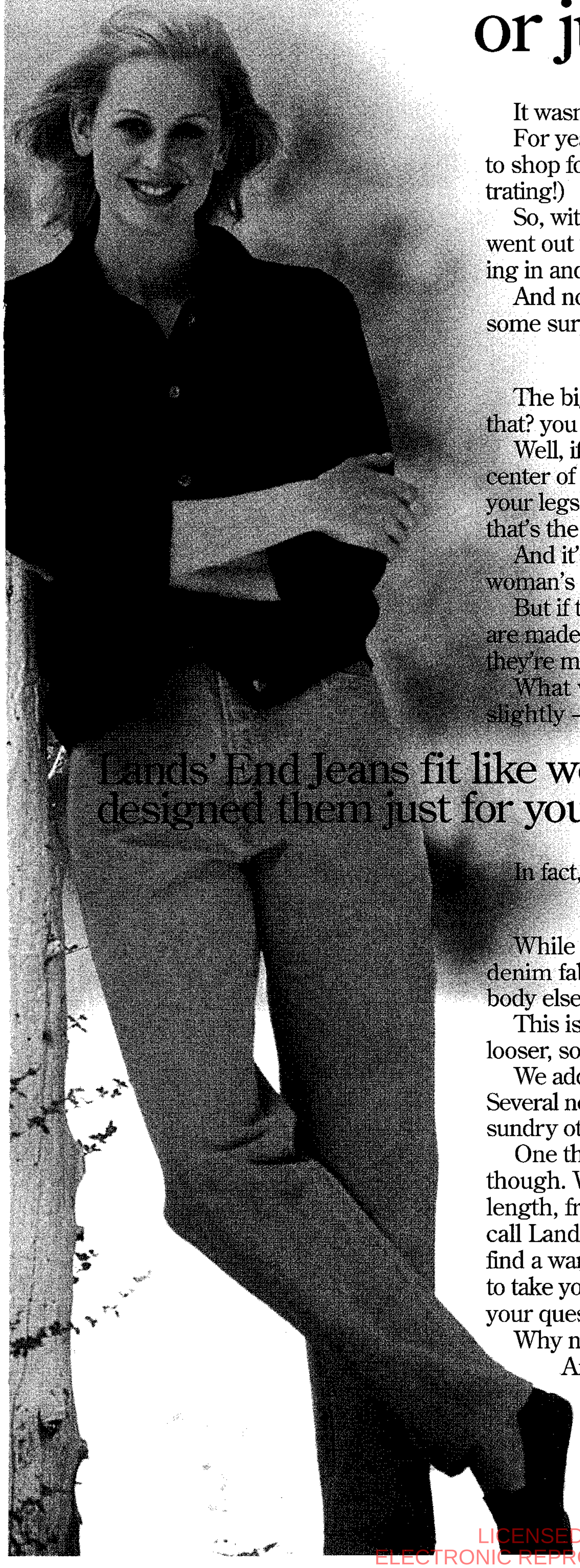

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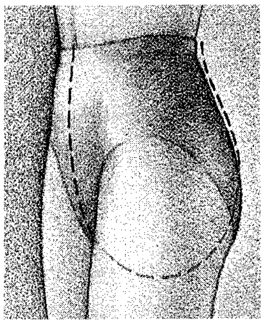

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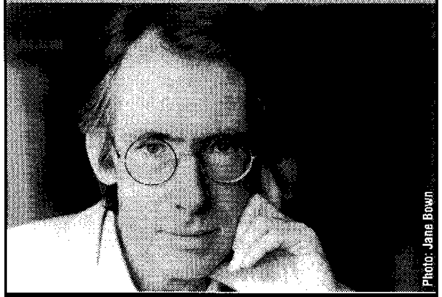

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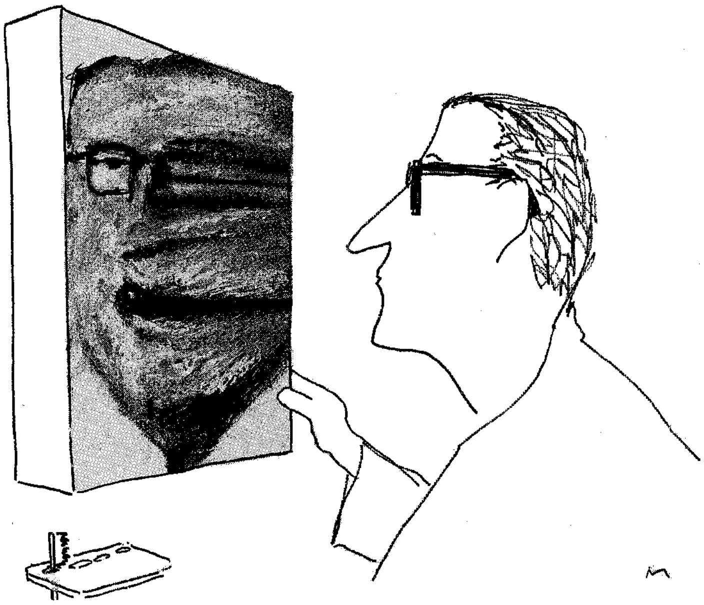
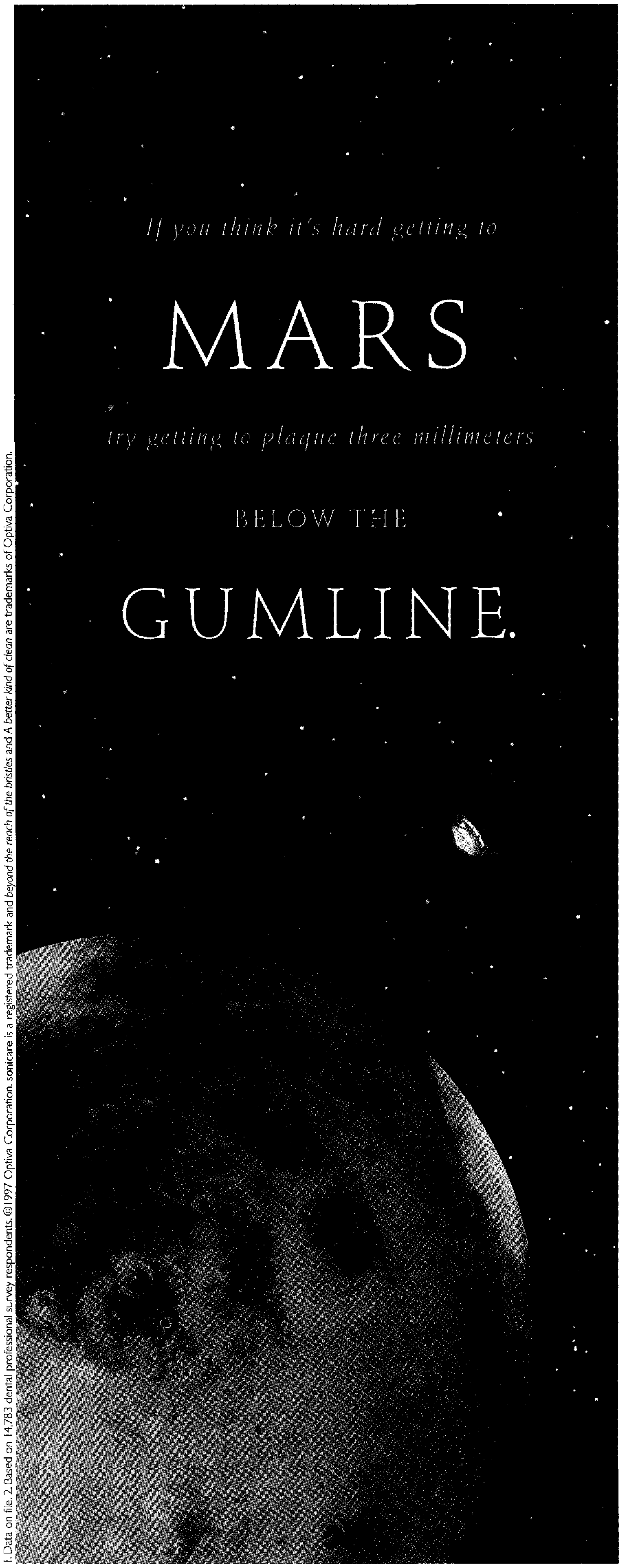


MICHAEL CRAWFORD

SEVEN years ago, Paul Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft, began to entertain one of those fantasies that, for a billionaire, are automatically more than fantasy. Allen believed that the high-tech industry was in a rut. The Web hadn't yet been born, and although the P.C. revolution that he'd helped instigate was chugging along, its progress was incremental—more of the same, only faster and cheaper. "It was a fallow period," he told me recently, "where the last flurry of innovation was still being digested and you couldn't see where the next flurry was going to come from." What would be interesting, Allen mused, would be to create an institution dedicated to ginning up that next flurry—a new research lab, situated in Silicon Valley and stocked with the best brains in computing, all formulating "ideas and opportunities" suited to what he liked to call "the wired world."

Allen had a model in mind for his project: Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center. By the nineties, Xerox PARC had become a solid, if conventional, corporate R. & D. outfit, but back in the seventies it developed a remarkable number of the technologies that the P.C. industry was built on. The graphical user interface, with its windows and icons and pull-down menus, and also the laser printer, the local area network, the word processor, and the P.C. itself had their roots in PARC. Yet, in one of Silicon Valley's most famous missed opportunities, it wasn't Xerox that commercialized most of these inventions but firms such as Apple and Microsoft, whose founders had visited PARC and then imitated its breakthroughs. Allen himself was one of the plunderers. When he paid a call on PARC in the early eighties, he was "blown away" by what he saw. "I said, 'We gotta have this on the P.C., and this, and this—all of it!' " he told me. A decade later, Allen wanted to found a PARC for the nineties, and to make sure that, this time, the innovators (and their financier) would reap the rewards.

Allen asked David Liddle, who was a well-respected figure in the Valley, to run his think tank. A gifted scientist, Liddle had been a researcher at PARC and had then gone on to head his own software



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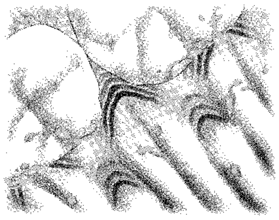

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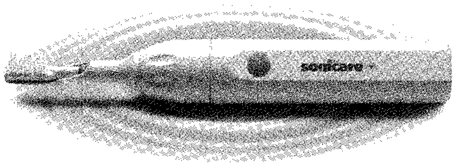

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company, Metaphor, which I.B.M. had recently bought when Allen approached him, in the fall of 1991. They agreed that the new lab should devote itself exclusively to technology for consumers, not businesses, and that it should tackle hard problems on a long time line instead of "taking little details from the baroque to the rococo," as Liddle put it. Allen pledged to invest a hundred million dollars in the lab over ten years. It was initially incorporated under the name Valhalla, but Liddle pointed out that, strictly speaking, Valhalla was where warriors were consigned to relive their deaths again and again. A new name was chosen, which was less mythical but more forward-looking: Interval Research.

In March of 1992, Interval opened its doors, then promptly slammed them shut. Ever since, Allen and Liddle have been obsessively secretive about what their researchers are up to. As a result, Interval has become a subject of intense speculation and skepticism in the Valley—sentiments that have been only heightened by vague leaks about exotic projects ("wearable computing") and by the lab's rare public forays, such as its sponsorship of a funky multimedia exhibit, called the "Electric Carnival," on the 1994 Lollapalooza tour. "Nobody wants to be mean, because David Liddle is such a nice guy," a leading venture capitalist told me. "But the consensus is that what Interval is doing is either irrelevant or just goofy."

Last fall, Liddle invited me to spend a few days at Interval and judge for myself. The lab had spun off three start-ups to take some of its inventions to market, and Liddle and Allen would be deciding imminently whether to spin off several more. Interval was, as the politicos say, ready to show a little leg. And Liddle said that, while there would be certain projects that I couldn't see, and some that I could see but not write about, I'd still get a sense that, far from working on "head-in-the-clouds, tree-full-of-owls stuff," Interval was doing what he and Allen had always said it would do: taking "long strides." However, with the rise of the Internet, Silicon Valley is flush with cash and alive with innovation. At a moment like this, the question isn't simply whether Interval is taking long strides but whether it's taking them quickly enough to avoid getting left in the dust.

SINCE Paul Allen resigned from Microsoft, in 1983—he had Hodgkin's disease but is now considered cured—his net worth has grown to more than fourteen billion dollars. For him, the attempt to re-create Xerox PARC at its zenith may be an act of nostalgia or idealism or idle recreation. For David Liddle, though, it is deeply personal. Liddle, at fifty-three, is a big, bearish man with a bald head and a white beard and clear blue eyes. He talks with his hands, in a genial, professorial manner that belies a cutting wit, a thin skin, and an ambition as fierce as any in Silicon Valley. Ruthann Quindlen, who is Liddle's wife and a prominent venture capitalist, told me, "With Interval, David is trying to correct what happened at PARC."

Xerox had established its lab in Palo Alto, near Stanford University, in 1970, in the hope of profiting from, as opposed to being destroyed by, the incursion of computers into the office. Presiding over PARC's computer-science wing was Bob Taylor, a former administrator in the federal Advanced Research Projects Agency. In the late sixties, at ARPA, he had funded the ARPANet—which later evolved into the Internet—and also much of the serious research on information technology going on at the time. Taylor knew all the brightest young stars of computer science and set about recruiting them to PARC. In 1972, Liddle, a Detroit native who had worked on an ARPA-funded project as a grad student at the University of Toledo, got his Ph.D., and moved West to join the élite team that Taylor had assembled. "It was definitely 'Welcome to the N.F.L.,'" Liddle said.

When Liddle arrived at PARC, Silicon Valley was still known as the South Bay, and computers were machines that typically filled up entire rooms. But Taylor's people had a radical idea about technology. They called it "personal-distributed computing," and around it they built a system of hardware and software which was a decade ahead of its time. They created, in effect, the first P.C.—a workstation called the Alto, which featured a mouse and point-and-click graphics. They tied the Altos together with a high-speed network known as Ethernet, connected them to the outside world through the ARPANet, and equipped them with programs like E-mail and the first WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) word processor. Liddle recalled, "People in the field whom you respected would show up and just gasp." Even more impressive was the reaction of nonspecialists. "You'd see the spouses of researchers coming in at night to use the system for things like P.T.A. reports," I was told by Charles Simonyi, who had devised PARC's word processor and, later, Microsoft Word. "These were normal people—civilians—using computers for normal stuff. This was unheard-of."

There were early signs that Xerox, with its buttoned-down East Coast culture, didn't appreciate what PARC was up to. A 1972 article in *Rolling Stone* praising the lab irritated the top executives: they hated Xerox's being touted in a "drug magazine" and recoiled from Annie Leibowitz's photographs, which revealed a certain similarity between hackers and hippies. In 1977, at a Xerox senior-management conference, in Boca Raton, the PARC team demonstrated its system and let the executives and their spouses give it a try. "All the wives came forward and sat down and oohed and ahed, because a lot of them had done clerical work and could see how wonderful this was," Bob Taylor told me. "But in those days there was an ethos that an executive didn't type, so all the men stood in the background. The executives wouldn't touch the Altos, just wouldn't come near them." Taylor frowned. "That should have been the handwriting on the wall."

No one felt Xerox's indifference more acutely than Liddle did. In the mid-seventies, he was put in charge of a division that was supposed to turn PARC's research into products, but Xerox didn't enter the blossoming P.C. market until 1981, with an advanced version of the Alto called the Star. Featuring the first full-blown graphical user interface, the Star was impressive; it was also slow and, at around sixteen thousand dollars a box, pricey. The Star bombed. And Xerox, facing severe competition in its core

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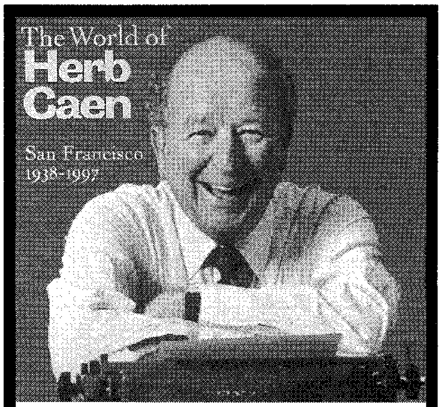

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copying business, abandoned its efforts to get into the P.C. business.

For Liddle, the decision was a harsh one. A couple of years earlier, Steve Jobs had toured PARC and come away inspired by the Alto. Jobs's first stab at a graphical machine, the Lisa, had been introduced just after the Star, and it suffered from many of the same maladies. If Xerox had let Liddle refine the Star, he might have come up with something like Jobs did on his second try—the Macintosh. Instead, Liddle resigned in frustration and joined a long line of PARC refugees who went on to found their own companies, such as 3Com, Adobe, and, in Liddle's case, Metaphor.

For some PARC veterans, Liddle not least among them, pride over having created technology that changed the world is tinged with bitterness over having failed to bring it triumphantly to market. But after some "soul-searching," Liddle said, he came to the view that Xerox's decision—to focus on defending its copier franchise instead of wading deeper into the uncharted waters of the computer business—was inevitable. "I call it the Silicon Paradox," he said. "The only companies that can afford to do research are those with a huge share of a multibillion-dollar market—A.T. & T., I.B.M., Xerox, G.M., DuPont. But the paradox is that the very circumstances that let you do research keep you from taking advantage of it. Meaning that if you already have a big, profitable business it probably makes more sense to focus on feeding that bulldog instead of going into the new businesses your research points to." If a research lab was going to prosper, Liddle concluded, it would need to be free of corporate parentage. It would need to be, in his phrase, "a PARC without a Xerox." Luckily, this was a luxury that Paul Allen could afford.

It is hard to imagine a more comfortable place to invent the future than Interval. Allen and Liddle's lab occupies several buildings on some of Silicon Valley's sweetest real estate, not far from the foothills on the western edge of Palo Alto. Inside, the halls are peaceful, the colors are soothing shades of gray and lavender, and every researcher has a private office—a major perk in a culture of cubicles. Outside, a tree-filled garden and a pond with a fountain present a pleasingly low-tech tableau.

Interval's campus is a half mile from PARC's. A handful of Interval's grand old men were Liddle's contemporaries there. More than a few PARCisms—"Build what you use, and use what you build," for instance—are part of the Interval vernacular. Yet in many respects Interval bears little resemblance to the PARC of the seventies. Whereas PARC made computers for the office, Interval is interested in products for the home; whereas PARC devised the whole architecture surrounding the desktop P.C., Interval wants to go beyond that architecture, which Liddle calls a "scorched desert." Interval's researchers foresee a world in which computing is ubiquitous and the purpose of it is no longer just to enhance productivity. "When you're making stuff for consumers, it's about how you fit into this person's life—whether you're aligning with the kind of person they want to be," Liddle said. "But technology companies don't know much about consumers. And companies that do things for consumers aren't very good at technology. For us, that's an interesting gap." Liddle has culled a "wide gene pool" of a hundred and twenty permanent researchers—among them many computer scientists and engineers, of course, but also artists, designers, musicians, videographers, social scientists, cognitive psychologists, and even journalists—in the hope of fostering "hardy, inquisitive, mongrel projects" rather than "deeper, narrower, nervous thoroughbreds."

Interval has more than twenty projects under way at any given time, and they encompass a diversity of topics—from "electro-optic and mechatronic design" to computers that do in fact live in your clothes. A few of these projects fall under the heading of the "D." in R. & D., meaning that they're being pursued with a particular product in mind. But the vast majority are pure research. Liddle wants his researchers to be free to "follow a good idea wherever it goes." He knows that much of the research won't lead directly to a product, and that some of it might seem, at a glance, to be a waste of time. The reigning catechism in Silicon Valley is that speed counts and that urgency is the mother of invention. But at Interval, where scientists speak of the pleasures of having "unfettered money to do whatever you want," the average research project lasts a leisurely thirty months. One afternoon at lunch, I began to ask Liddle about how Interval could compete with the Internet businesses that are charging ahead so frantically, and I mentioned Netscape.

"O.K., let's talk about Netscape,"

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Liddle said, and he then observed, correctly, that its browser technology had sprung out of government-funded research at the University of Illinois which cost millions of dollars and took more than three years to complete. The point, Liddle went on, is that most great companies build off research done somewhere else—in universities or in labs such as Bell Labs and PARC—and that research is unavoidably costly and time-consuming. "People often think of research as a form of development—that it's about doing exactly what you planned, doing it on time, and doing it with the resources that you said you'd use," he explained. "But, if you're going to do that, you have to know what you're doing, and, if you know what you're doing, it isn't really research."

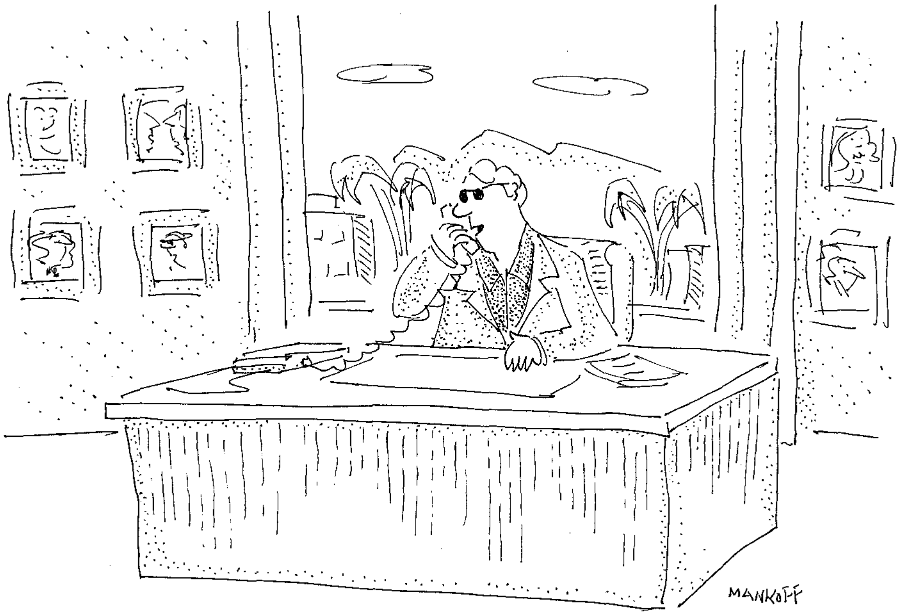
The first researcher I met was Michael Naimark, a forty-five-year-old "media artist," who described his work at Interval, which consists of two 3-D art installations, as "classically a-entrepreneurial." He explained that although it had produced two patents, this had been "totally unintentional." Naimark led me to a room where a group of researchers demo'd the Magic Morphin' Mirror, which comprised a set of computers equipped with video cameras that capture your face and then distort it (in a Jim Carrey sort of way) on a nearby TV. The Mirror's creators told me that tracking a face as it moves in real time is a particularly hard challenge in giving computers "vision"—the ability to "look" at you, just as you look at them. "The average Japanese urinal is more perceptive than your P.C.," a researcher said. "As it is, the P.C. doesn't know if you've left the room or not, but, if it did, it could do different things in different cases"—shut itself down, for instance, if you had gone for the day.

Making technology more intimate—and more commonplace—is a central concern at Interval. "There's this third wave of computing coming that's all about microprocessors that are embedded in all sorts of everyday devices, and this plays right into the hands of industrial designers," Colin Burns, a Scotsman and an industrial designer, told me. Burns talked about how the designers at Interval had built a "cartoon house" out of foam core to help them brainstorm about ways that computers could be seamlessly integrated into a domestic environment. He cited the Valley company named WebTV, which has designed a system to put the Net on television, as an example of the trend away from the notion of "computers being this gray thing that sits on a desk in the spare room." Burns imagines them in the walls, in the furniture, in the bathroom, and in the bedroom—and looking stylish in all those places.

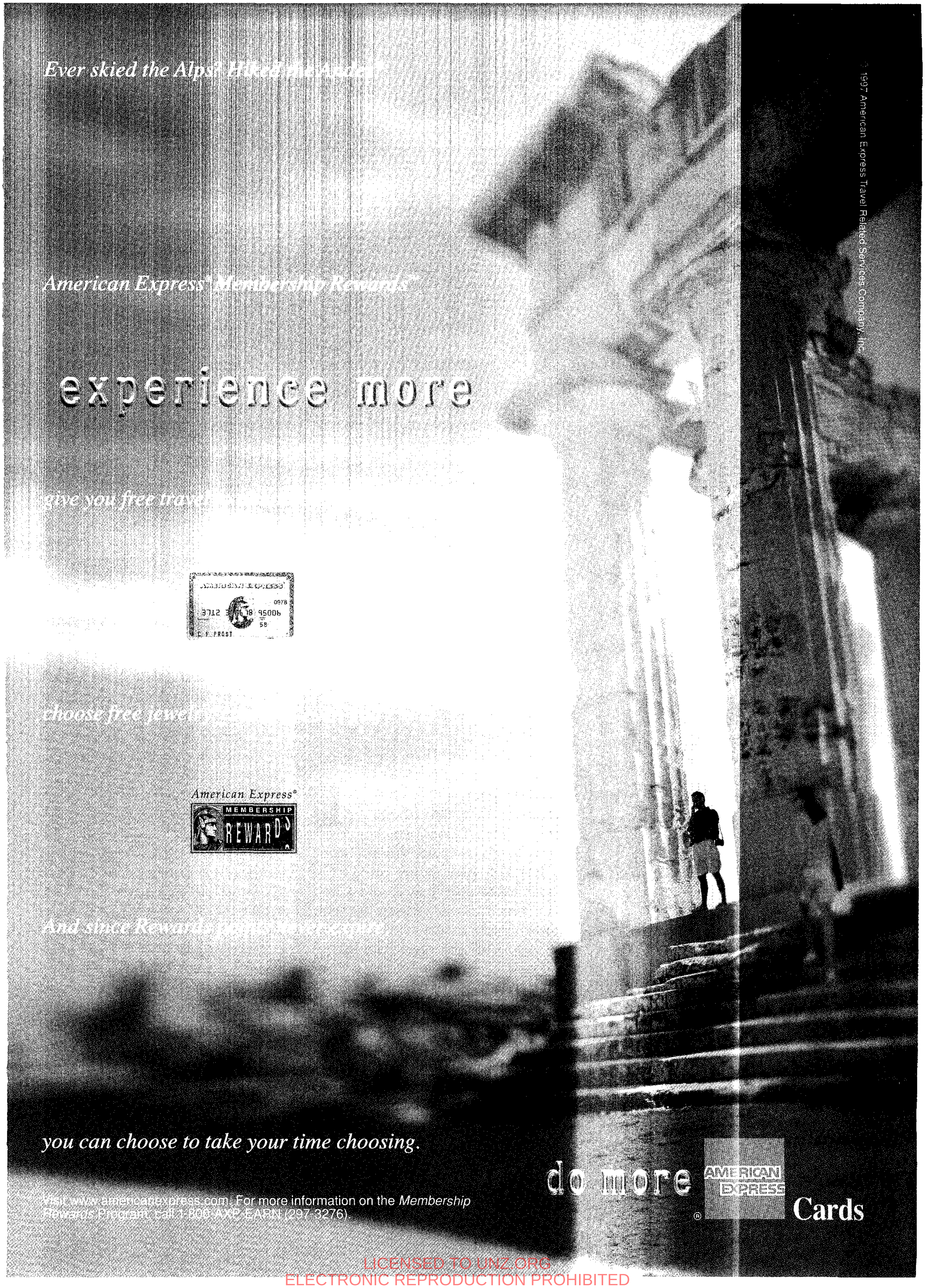
Burns's mentor, Bill Verplank, oversees Interval's "haptics" lab, which studies the ways that people use their hands. Verplank is interested in making computer interfaces that are dynamically tactile. He sat me down in front of the Phantom, a "force feedback" device that is used for experiments in creating illusions of touch. As I held a pen suspended from a hinged arm on the Phantom, Verplank used a P.C. to create a range of sensations. Though the pen touched nothing, it felt as if it were sticking to a gooey surface, then plucking the string of an instrument, then rubbing against sandpaper. Verplank talked about enabling users not just to look at 3-D images on computer screens but to "feel in 3-D."

Verplank is one of Interval's elder statesmen, a group that includes Glenn Edens, who designed the world's first laptop and is now working on a new kind of multimedia network; Jim Boyden, who invented the ink-jet printer and is now focussed on wearable computers; and Bonnie Johnson, who runs a wing of the lab which conducts in-depth studies of consumer habits and life styles among various demographic groups, from teen-agers (hence the Lollapalooza tour) to senior citizens. At the other end of the spectrum are the younger researchers, like Tom Ngo, a fresh-faced expert in algorithm development. One day in his office I asked Ngo how old he was, and he said, "I'm eleven thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight days old. I'm two days from turning twelve thousand—I have that in my calendar, because I enjoy round numbers." He added, "In humanspeak, I'm thirty-two."

Ngo demo'd a technique by which a P.C. disentangled two voices talking over each other—a trick that human beings routinely perform at cocktail parties but computers have found nearly impossible to master. The next day, I visited Malcolm Slaney, a specialist in signal computation. Slaney showed me a way of manipulating sound so that voices can be played at twice normal speed and not sound like chipmunks, and a program that let a P.C. "hear" the differences in agitation in your voice. And he demo'd Video Rewrite, a process that uses digital animation to achieve automatically and inexpensively the sort of lip-synching effects created at great cost in "Forrest Gump." (At the end of the presentation, there was footage of President Kennedy declaring in someone



"Look, babe. At this point, you've reinvented yourself so many times you're back to who you were at the start."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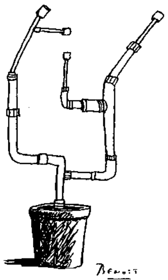
else's voice, "I never met Forrest Gump. I did not inhale. Read my lips.") Slaney noted that Video Rewrite could put an end to the horrendous dubbing that afflicts so many cheap foreign films. "No more 'Godzilla syndrome,'" he said.

THERE are plenty of projects at Interval, like Video Rewrite, whose commercial potential is obvious, if untested. Various researchers are working on applying browser technology to the watching of TV news; on devising tools and systems that let people with no musical training make music and people with no filmmaking skills produce simple movies; on building a virtual-reality system that overcomes the worst of that technology's nausea-inducing glitches; and on putting together a home-media system that would weave everything electronic in your house into a seamless network.

Nevertheless, doubts about Interval remain pervasive in Silicon Valley. Liddle's wife, the venture capitalist Ruthann Quindlen, said, "The entrepreneurial community is very results-oriented, and results in the Valley are measured by one metric: the creation of firms that create huge value. To the extent that Interval hasn't yet done that, the community thinks there are cool things going on there but it's still unsure about what the payoff will be."



In November of 1996, Interval took its first steps toward a payoff by spinning off its first start-ups. Today, two of the three—Electric Planet, which is developing a computer-vision system that lets kids play games on a P.C. without using a keyboard, and Carnelian, which makes software to help publishers make money on the Web—have yet to hit the market, but the third, an entertainment-software firm called Purple Moon, is off and running.

The idea for Purple Moon was planted in 1992, when Liddle and Brenda Laurel, an Interval computer-design expert, pondered an anomaly that seemed to cry out for study. Computer games were a six-billion-dollar business that catered almost exclusively to boys. Why had the industry failed to appeal to girls? Laurel is a self-styled "interface cowboy" and "equity feminist." She had ideas about why girls weren't responding, and Liddle had quite different ones. "But we shook hands and laid our agendas at the door," she told me. "Our goal was to figure out how to get girls to put their hands on computers and have fun. If that meant the box had to be pink, we'd make it pink. Luckily, it didn't."

Over five years, Laurel led a project exploring gender differences and play patterns among kids aged from seven to twelve—the "post-doll, pre-makeup era" for girls, she said. Researchers interviewed eleven hundred children. At one point, they gave them "gender-bent toys," which they had created by taking traditional toys for boys and girls and giving them a cross-gender tweak. (A Tonka truck was covered with fuzzy pink material; a diary was marked with bloodstains and bullet holes and labelled a "secret journal.") The goal was to see "what overrides what in the vocabulary of gender," Laurel said. "Fuzzy pinkness overrides truckness—a fuzzy pink truck isn't for a boy at all. Bullet holes and blood did not override diaryness. But when we took Echo the Dolphin, from a gentle video game popular with girls, and gave it bloody fangs, we immediately regendered the game." Laurel handed me a Barbie doll as G.I. Joe. "This was a toy nobody wanted. The blond hair turned the boys off, and the uniform turned the girls off. Competing gender signals cancelled out the value of the toy completely."

Eventually, Laurel's team came up with a "design heuristic." Their research concluded that, contrary to the conventional wisdom, the reason that girls don't like computer games isn't that they're too violent but that they're too boring. "In most games, you just do the same idiotic thing over and over," she said. Boys are interested in beating the clock, in beating each other, in seeing their initials on the high-scorers list of an arcade console. Girls want covert competition, narrative complexity, and characters they can relate to. To meet those demands, Purple Moon designed two quite different games. Rockett's New School is what Laurel calls a "when-I-grow-up fantasy," in which the player helps the heroine, a redheaded girl named Rockett, traverse the unimaginably complex social hierarchies of junior high school. In Secret Paths in the For-

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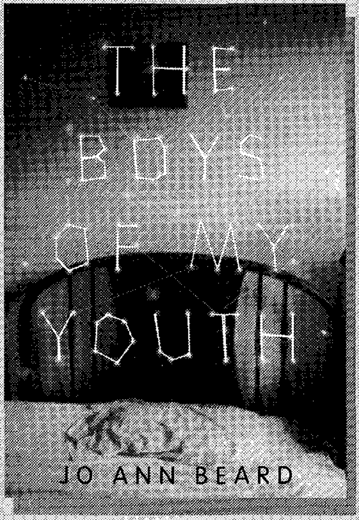

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est, characters from Rockett's school meet in a tree house, explore lush sylvan landscapes ("magic gardens, magic mountains, magic forests, magic clouds—that's where all this misty, dreamy, inner-life stuff comes out," according to Laurel), and talk about their troubles.

Purple Moon is the first Interval project to play out fully—going from concept to research to development to spinoff to product to the store shelves. The CD-ROMs of Rockett's New School and Secret Paths were big sellers at Christmas, and a Web site is flourishing. When Interval spun off Purple Moon, Ruthann Quindlen persuaded her partners in the venture-capital firm I.V.P. to invest four million dollars in the company. (Another investor was Herb Allen, of Allen & Company.) At I.V.P., potential investments are put into one of two categories: "faster, better, cheaper," where the risks are relatively low but so are the rewards, and "brave new world," where the opposite is true. Quindlen said her partners believe that Purple Moon is clearly in the second category—a company that, if and when it goes public, could be worth as much as a billion dollars.

For Liddle, who often likens Interval itself to a venture-capital fund, which places an array of bets in the hope that a few will hit big, such an outcome would be satisfying on more than one level. Five years into Interval's life, he acknowledges that Paul Allen, who is referred to affectionately around the lab as "our shareholder," has already put up close to the hundred million dollars that he initially pledged. If Purple Moon should make a splash in the stock market, it could return Allen's investment several times over. Moreover, it would provide a plausible riposte to those in Silicon Valley who believe that Interval, far from being the new PARC, is, as one executive put it, "the clearest sign yet that Paul Allen has more money than he knows what to do with."

FOR now, however, Allen and Liddle remain in the awkward, if self-imposed, position of having raised expectations high while being unwilling to say much about Interval's endeavors. "It was the same way with PARC," Liddle said. "The reaction of the industry to what we were doing was that it was all irrelevant and excessively eggheaded and intellectual. But people didn't really have a good idea of what we were doing at PARC, and they don't have a good idea of what we're doing here at Interval. Pretty soon, they will."

As more and more of Interval's work becomes public, either through further spinoffs or just through a more open policy, the skepticism about it is bound to fade. Much (if not all) of the research and development going on there is firmly in synch with commercial reality—so much so, in fact, that many of its ideas are likely to encounter furious competition in the marketplace. When Allen started Interval, he was pining for the Next Big Thing. Now the Internet is playing that role, stirring up a swarm of innovation reminiscent of the early days of the P.C. industry. Both start-ups and established firms, such as I.B.M. and Sun Microsystems, are making important breakthroughs, such as Java, the Sun programming language that is rapidly becoming a lingua franca for the Net and could also play a critical part in letting small, ubiquitous, networked computers talk to one another. At Microsoft, Allen's old partner Bill Gates has assembled a research squad twice the size of Interval's with much the same aim. And Xerox PARC itself is forging ahead; it has, for example, come up with a "hyperbolic browser," which lets you navigate the Internet through a system of branches rather than overlapping windows. In an environment as fertile as this, Interval may well succeed. But there is little chance that it, or any other institution, will occupy the intellectual position that PARC enjoyed in the seventies.

Liddle says he hopes simply to produce a reasonable return on Allen's investment and to "change the way people look at or think about information technology for ordinary people." His optimism is evident. Until recently, Interval's visitor's badges bore the dates "1992-2002," an allusion to Allen's ten-year commitment to fund the lab, but then Liddle had the end date removed. "I had a job candidate who said, 'Gee, I was surprised that you were hiring so close to your expiration date,' " he said. "I had to explain that 2002 was just the time when we'd know if we were making progress—it's not a 'sell by' date."

Allen agrees. "I'd like to see Interval have an ongoing experience beyond 2002, but you make judgments as you go along," he said. "You know, paradigm-shifting ideas don't grow on trees." ♦

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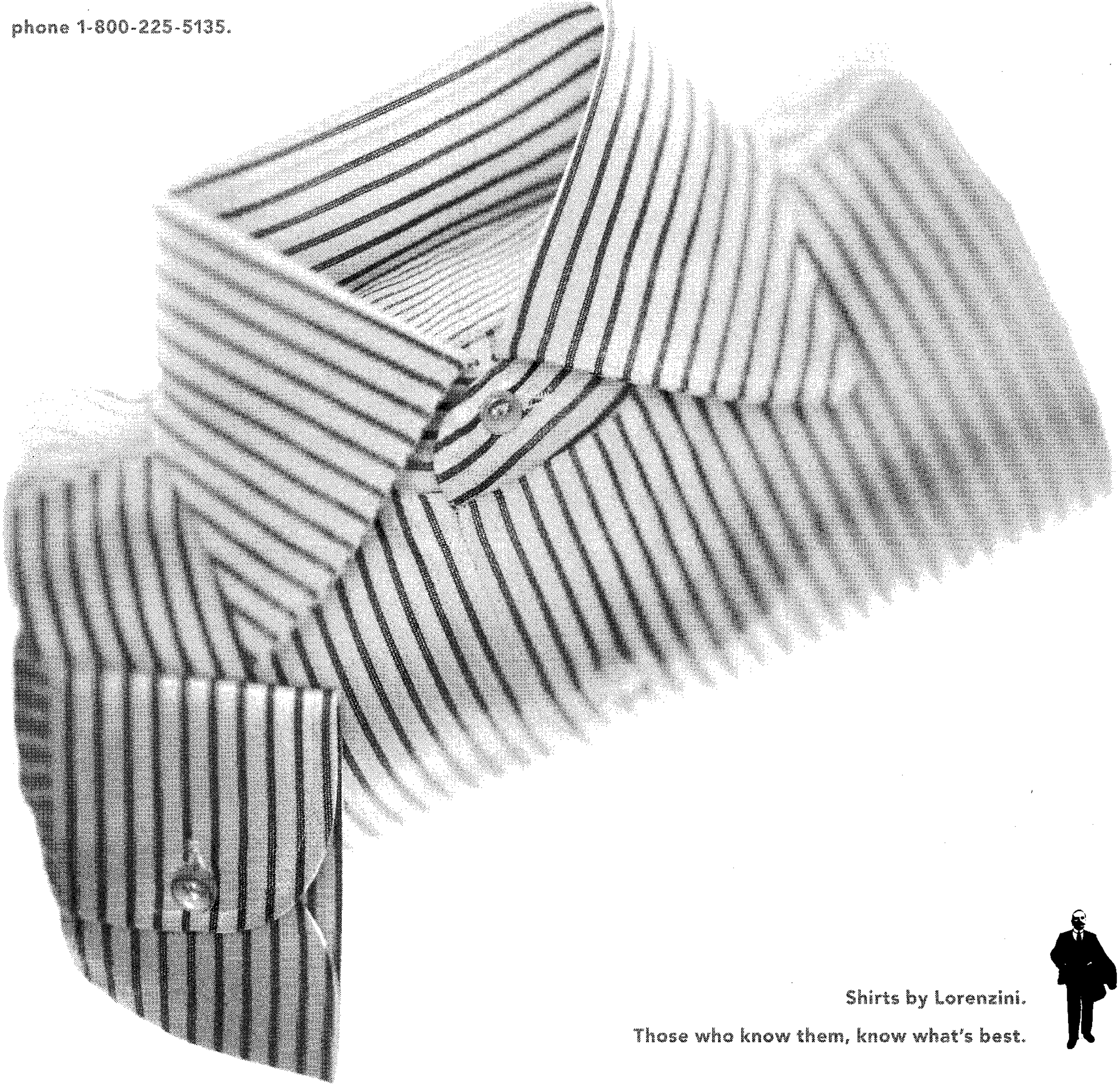

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L.A. GLOWS

Why Southern California doesn't look like any place else.

BY LAWRENCE WESCHLER

THE day of that infamous slow-motion Bronco chase—actually, it was already past sundown here in New York as I sat before the glowing TV in our darkening kitchen, transfixed by the unfurling stream of bob-and-wafting helicopter images, hot tears streaming down my cheeks—my eight-year-old daughter gazed for a while at the screen and then over at me, at which point, baffled and concerned, she inquired, "What's wrong, Daddy? Did you know that guy?"

"What guy?" I stammered, surfacing from my trance, momentarily disoriented. "Oh, no, no. I didn't know the guy. I don't give a damn about the guy. It's that *light!* That's the light I keep telling you girls about." You girls: her mother and her. That light: the late-afternoon light of Los Angeles—golden pink off the bay through the smog and onto the palm fronds. A light I've found myself pining for every day of the nearly two decades since I left Southern California.

The rapturous light of the city has been known to drive Angelenos into a state of "egoless bliss."

© RAÚL VEGA

MONTHS passed, and on sporadic returns to L.A., for one project or another, I occasionally recounted my Bronco-chase experience, and everybody knew exactly what I was talking about. The light of the place is a subject that Angelenos are endlessly voluble about—only, it turns out, people bring all sorts of different associations to the subject.

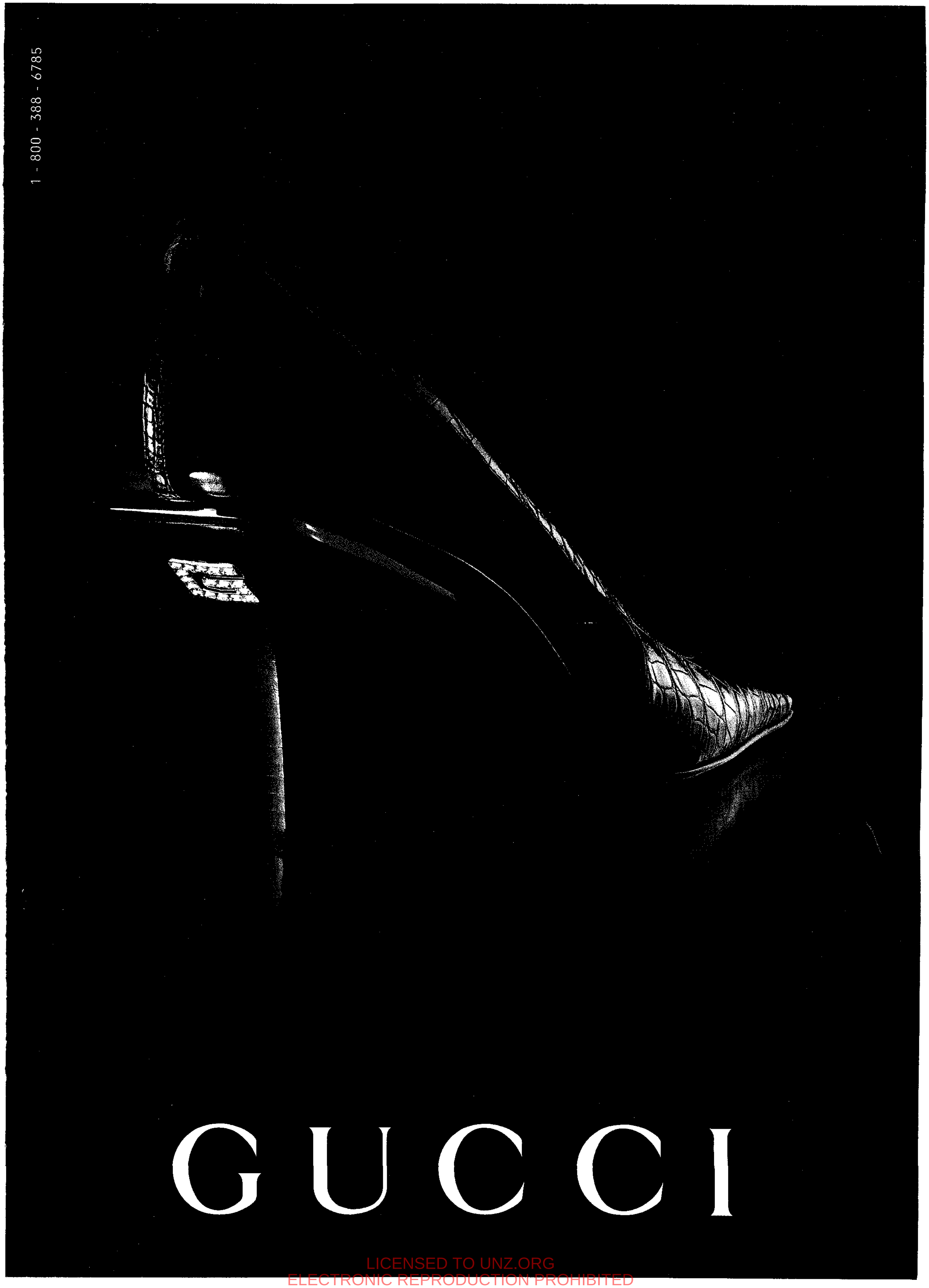
For example, David Hockney maintains that the extravagant light of Los Angeles was one of the strongest lures drawing him to Southern California in the first place, more than thirty years ago—and, in fact, long before that. "As a child, growing up in Bradford, in the North of England, across the gothic gloom of those endless winters," he recalls, "I remember how my father used to take me along with him to see the Laurel and Hardy movies. And one of the things I noticed right away, long before I could even articulate it exactly, was how Stan and Ollie, bundled in their winter overcoats, were casting these wonderfully strong, crisp shadows. We never got shadows of any sort in winter. And already I knew that someday I wanted to settle in a place with winter shadows like that."

Robert Irwin, one of the presiding masters of L.A.'s Light and Space artistic movement of the late sixties and early seventies, and a native Angeleno, concurred that there's something extraordinary about the light of L.A., though he said that it was sometimes hard to characterize it exactly. "One of its most common features, however," he suggested, "is the haze that fractures the light, scattering it in such a way that on many days the world almost has *no* shadows. Broad daylight—and, in fact, lots and lots of light—and no shadows. Really peculiar, almost dreamlike. . . . I love walking down the street when the light gets all reverberant, bouncing around like that, and everything's just humming in your face."

A few days after my conversation with Irwin, I happened to be talking with John Bailey, the cinematographer, most recently of "As Good As It Gets," and he energetically confirmed Irwin's observation: "I have a sophisticated light meter, which in my work I'm always consulting. Most places in the world when it's overcast enough so that you get no shadows, the meter lets you know you have to set your aperture a stop to a stop and a half below full sun. Here in L.A. the same kind of diffuse light, no shadows—I could hardly believe the first time I encountered this—and my meter will read almost the same as for full sunlight. Other days, though, you'll be getting open sun, which, of course, here means open desert sun—a harshly contrasting light. After all, for all its human settlement, the Southland is still this freak of nature—a desert abutting the sea. And open desert light is very harsh—you get these deep, deep shadows."

I mentioned the Laurel and Hardy shadows of Hockney's youth. "Exactly," Bailey said. "Shadows and no shadows—that's the duality of L.A. light, isn't it? And how appropriate for a place where the sun rises in the desert and sets in the ocean."

ANOTHER day, I called Hal Zirin, out at Caltech—the man who founded and until recently ran the solar observatory up at Big Bear Lake. I suppose I was wondering how the sun itself looked in the light of L.A. "Ah, Southern California," Zirin responded, with improbable enthusiasm. "God's gift to astronomy!" I laughed, figuring he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"Haven't you ever seen California wine being made?"

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was joking. "Oh no," he assured me. "I'm completely serious. Mt. Wilson, Mt. Palomar, the Griffith Observatory, our solar observatory out at Big Bear . . . It's not for nothing that during the first two-thirds of this century a good three-quarters of the most significant discoveries in astronomy were made here in Southern California."

So wherefore was it?

"Well, it's all thanks to the incredible stability, the uncanny stillness, of the air around L.A. It goes back to that business people are always talking about—a desert thrusting up against the ocean, and, specifically, against the eastern shore of a northern ocean, with its cold, clockwise, southward-moving current. And the other crucial element in the mix is these high mountain ranges girdling the basin—so that what happens here is that ocean-cooled air drifts in over the coastal plain and gets trapped beneath the warmer desert air floating in over the mountains to the east. That's the famous thermal inversion, and the opposite of the usual arrangement, where warm surface air progressively cools as it rises. And the atmosphere below the inversion layer is incredibly stable. You must have noticed, for instance, how, if you're on a transcontinental jet coming in for a landing at LAX, once you pass over the mountains on your final approach, no matter how turbulent the flight may have been prior to that, suddenly the plane becomes completely silent and steady and still." (Actually, I had noticed and wondered about it.) "That's the stable air of L.A."

And why was such stability so important to astronomy?

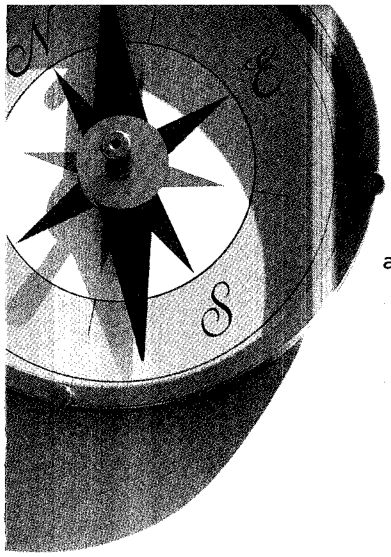
"Well," Zirin explained, "have you noticed, for instance, how if you go out to the Arizona desert, say, it may be incredibly clear but the road off in the distance is shimmering? That's the heat rising in waves off the surface of the ground. On the other hand, go out to the Santa Monica palisade and gaze out over the cool water. It's completely clear and distinct, clean out to the horizon. The heat rising from the ground in most places—or, rather, the resultant interplay of pockets of hot and cold air, acting like distorting lenses in the atmosphere up above—is in turn what makes stars shimmer and twinkle in the night sky. A twinkling star can be very pretty and romantic, but twinkling is distortion, by definition, and if you're an astronomer you want your star—or, for that matter, your sun, if that's what you're looking at—to be distortion-free: solid as a rock. And that's what you get here. The stars don't twinkle in L.A."

And, it occurred to me, that might also account for the preternatural clarity of the encircling mountains, off in the distance—that hushed sense you sometimes get that you could just reach out and touch them—on those smog-free days, that is, when you're able to see them at all.

ANGELENOS tend to take perverse credit for the uncanny light of the place, as if they themselves were the ones who made it all happen; and, in fact, according to at least one way of looking at things, they may have a point. Someone told me that if it was air pollution I wanted to consider I should go talk to Glen Cass, at Caltech, a jovial, rotund, clear-eyed, and short-cropped professor of environmental engineering with a very specific interest in smog: he's obsessed with the effect of air pollution on visibility—in other words, exactly why it is that some afternoons he can go up on the roof of the Millikan Library there at Caltech, gaze out toward the San Gabriel Mountains, towering well over a mile high, less than five miles to the north, and not make out a thing through the bright, white (shadow-obliterating) atmospheric haze.

So, I asked Cass, what, exactly, was all that white stuff choking the view of his beloved mountains?

"Well, it turns out that there are all



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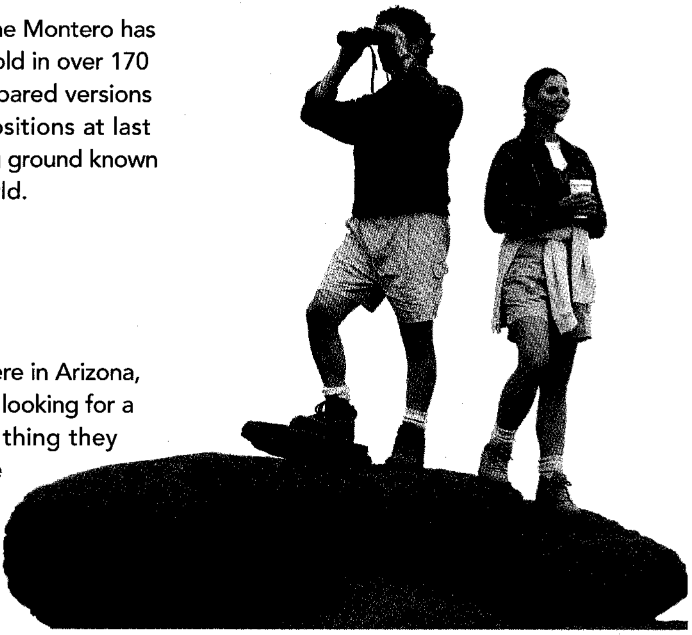

In a remote location somewhere in Arizona, Bonnie and Phil Goldberg are looking for a new hiking trail. It's a good thing they took their Montero because this place doesn't show up on the map. And we're sure they'll want to come back.

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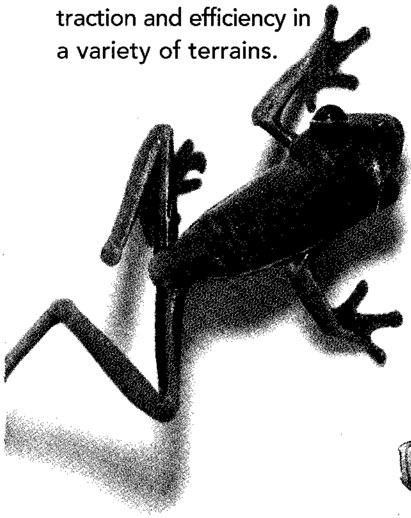

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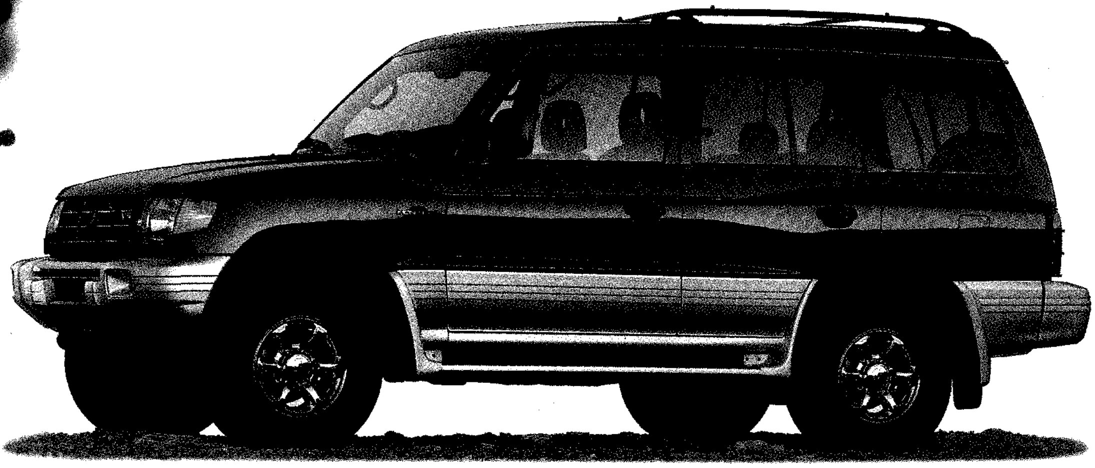

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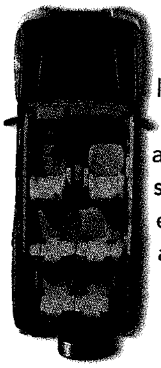

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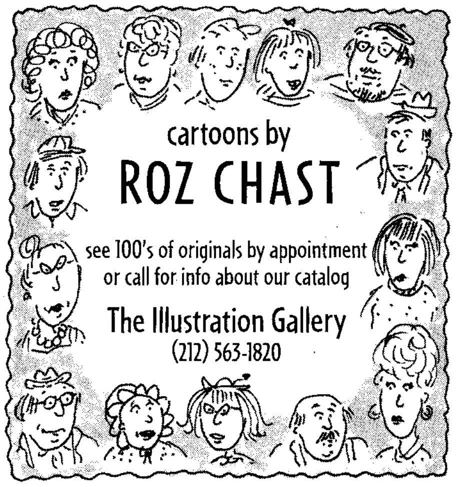

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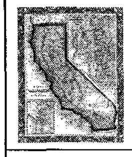

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sorts of different sizes of particles floating in the air—from absolutely minuscule to relatively large and coarse," he explained. "Some of those—and especially the larger ones—simply get in the way of the line of vision between you and, say, that mountain over there. They blot out or defract the beams of reflected sunlight emanating from the mountain that would otherwise be conveying visual detail to your eyes. Contrary to what you might think, though, it's not so much the large, coarse particles that pose the biggest problem. Instead, it's those of a specific intermediate size—about half a micrometre, to be exact—that constitute the jokers in the deck when it comes to visibility.

"And the thing about particles of that size is that they happen to have about the same diameter as the wavelength of natural sunlight. So that, when the sunlight from over my shoulder, say, hits one of those particles floating between me and the mountain that I'm trying to make out, the light bounces off the particle and right into my eye. On some days there can be billions of such particles in the line of sight between me and the mountain—each of them with the mirrorlike potential to bounce white sunlight directly back into my eye. It can get to be like having a billion tiny suns between you and the thing you're trying to see. That's what the white stuff is. And we have a technical term for it."

I hunkered down over my notebook, preparing to take down complex technological dictation.

"We call it airlight."

The next morning, I happened to be jogging on the beach in Santa Monica, heading north, in the direction of Malibu, as the sun was rising behind me. The sky was already bright, though the sun was still occluded behind a low-clinging fog bank over LAX. The Malibu mountains up ahead were dark and clear and distinct, and seemed as if freshly minted. Presently, the sun must have broken out from behind the fog bank—I realized this because suddenly the sand around me turned pale purplish pink and my own long shadow shot out before me. I looked up at the mountains, and they were *gone:* lost in the airlight.

Later, as I was describing the experience to a poet friend, Dennis Phillips, and trying to explain the business about the billion tiny suns, he interrupted, correcting me. "No, no," he said. "You mean a billion tiny moons."

ACTUALLY, the air-pollution situation in L.A. has been improving markedly over the past fifteen years, as Cass is only too happy to affirm. Nevertheless, the light seems more uncanny than ever—or, rather, it may simply be reverting to its original splendor. What with the thermal inversion, even as the smog has subsided a softer version of the airlight phenomenon has persisted—one noted by Carey McWilliams, the poet laureate of California historians, who in 1946 recorded how, the region's aridity notwithstanding, "the charm of Southern California is largely to be found in the air and the light. Light and air are really one element: indivisible, mutually interacting, thoroughly interpenetrated."

I was recalling McWilliams's comments one morning while breakfasting with the architect Coy Howard, a true student of the light, and he concurred. "It's an incredibly loaded subject—this diaphanous soup we live in," he said. "It feels primeval—there's a sense of the undifferentiated, the nonhierarchical. It's not exactly a dramatic light. In fact, 'dramatic' is exactly what it's not. If anything, it's meditative. And there's something really peculiar about it. In places where you get a crisp, sharp light with deep, clean shadows—which we do get here sometimes—you get confronted with a strong contrasting duality: illumination and opacity. But when you have the kind of veiled light we get here more regularly you become aware of a sort of multiplicity—not illumination so much as luminosity. Southern California glows, not just all day but at night as well, and the opacity melts away into translucency, and even transparency."

I wasn't quite getting it, so Howard tried again.

"Things in the light here have a kind of threeness instead of the usual twoness. There's the thing—the object—and its shadow, but then a sense of reflection as well. You know how you can be walking along the beach, let's say, and you'll see a seagull walking along ahead of you, and a wave comes in, splashing its feet. At that moment, you'll see the bird, its shadow, and its reflection. Well, there's something about the environment here—the air, the atmosphere, the light—that makes *everything* shimmer like that. There's a kind of glowing thickness to the world—the diaphanous soup I was talking about—which, in turn, grounds a magic-meditative sense of presence."

The poet Paul Vangelisti knew exactly what Coy Howard was getting at when I related our conversation to him. In fact, he was blown away, for he claimed he'd been trying to frame almost that same point earlier that day, in the latest of a series of daily poems he'd been working on, based on the view across the neighboring arroyo from the window of his Echo Park studio, celebrating, in this instance:

> . . . the pigeon flock
> soaring and tumbling every noon
> silver then white then sunlight
> against the weight of air at the window.

"Coy Howard's associations run to seagulls," Vangelisti pointed out, "and mine run to pigeons—maybe not that surprising a convergence after all, since birds are the true citizens of light. But I know just what he means about the sense of threeness—silver then white then sunlight—and about the meditative, as opposed to the dramatic, quality of the light here."

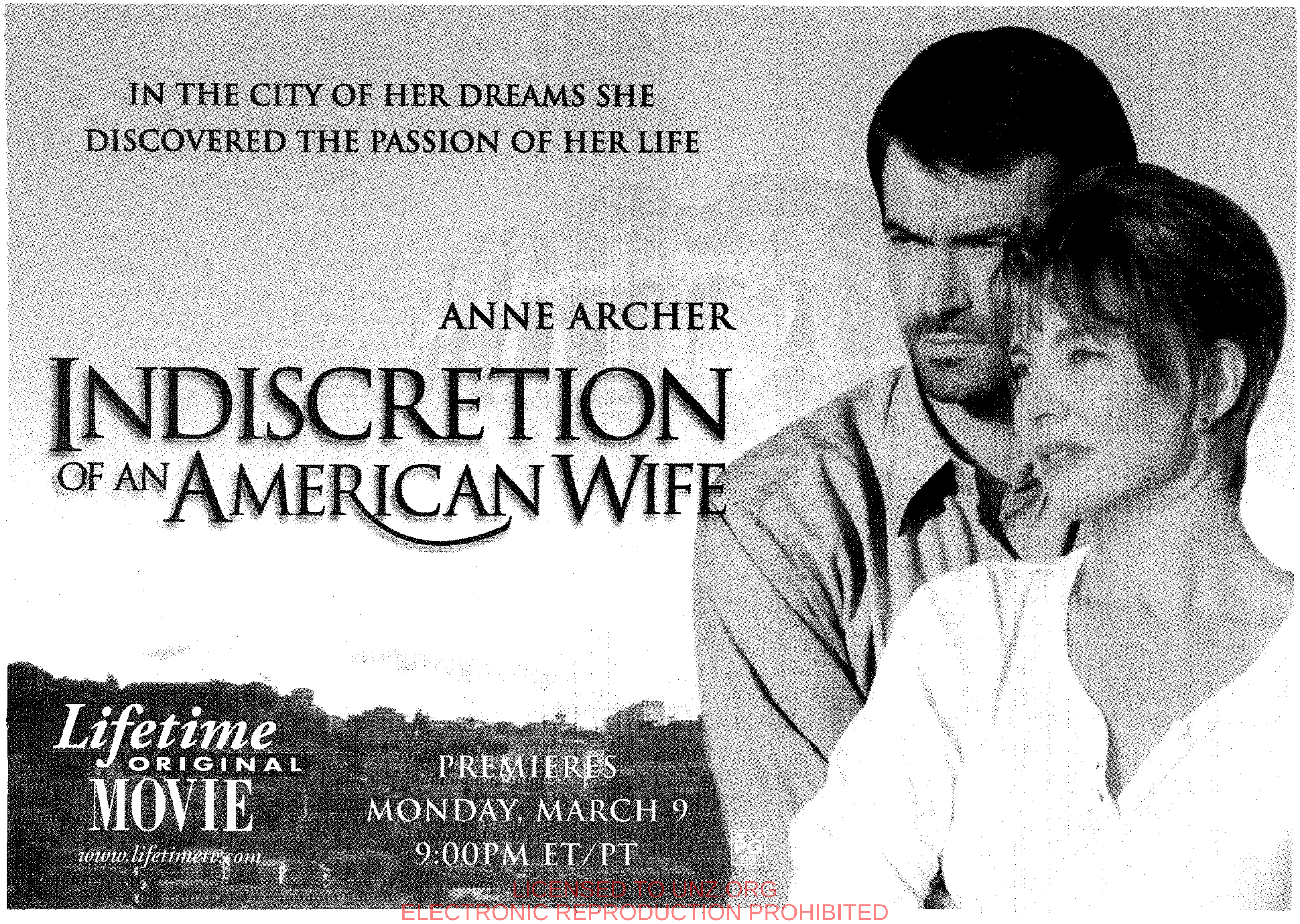
The light is a constantly recurring theme among the poets of L.A., but I can think of few whose work is as light-saturated, as light-blasted, as Vangelisti's. He entitled his first collection, back in 1973, simply "Air."

"For one thing," he elaborated, "I think the light of L.A. is the whitest light I've ever seen, and the sky is one of the highest. You really notice it if you're playing baseball and you're in the outfield. You're always losing the ball in that high white sky. And then, too, there's a strange thing that happens with the sense of distance and of expanse. Because from here in Echo Park the ocean off in the distance is oceanic, but so is the intervening land, and indeed so is the sky. It's that even, undifferentiated, nonhierarchical quality Coy Howard is talking about. And a weird thing is how that light yields a simultaneous sense of distance and of flatness: things seem very sharp up close and far away, with nothing in between. And the uncanny result is that you lose yourself—somehow not outwardly but, rather, inwardly. Here the light draws you *inward.*"

ANNE AYRES, the gallery director at the Otis Institute, told me that some days the light of L.A. can drive her into a state of "egoless bliss." And John Bailey described to me his own occasional bouts with "rapture." But there were others I got in touch with who were having none of it.

"You're talking to the wrong guy," the director Peter Bogdanovich warned me when I reached him. "See, I'm a New Yorker, and though I've lived in L.A. for thirty years, I really haven't been that happy here the last fifteen. I miss seasons, and I hate the way the light of the place throws you into such a trance that you fail to realize how time is passing. It's like what Orson Welles once told me. 'The terrible thing about L.A.,' he said, 'is that you sit down, you're twenty-five, and when you get up you're sixty-two.' "

"But light is *over!*" Paul Schimmel, the chief curator at MOCA, the Museum



of Contemporary Art, exclaimed when I broached my pet subject to him. "There hasn't been light in this city for more than ten years now." Schimmel was the creator of "Helter Skelter," a seminal show at MOCA, which endeavored to prove precisely that point back in 1992. On first arriving in L.A., in 1981, Schimmel had half expected to encounter some third- or fourth-generation version of the Light and Space orthodoxies that had come to be so closely identified with the L.A. art scene during the sixties and the early seventies—through the hegemony of masters ranging from Robert Irwin to Richard Diebenkorn. Instead, he found a younger generation of artists—exemplified by the likes of Mike Kelley and Nancy Rubins—who seemed to have rejected the light aesthetic entirely, opting instead for a decidedly darker, seedier, more grimly unsettling and dystopian view of the L.A. reality. "Partly," Schimmel speculated, "this was because by the late seventies and early eighties light in L.A. had been so academicized that it had really become little more than a commercial cliché. There was nowhere else to go with it. In part, too, long before a lot of other people, these artists were onto some of the bleak social transformations that were eroding the city itself. 'Helter Skelter' closed on a Sunday, and the worst riots in the city's history erupted the following Wednesday."

Of course, in its very title the "Helter Skelter" show acknowledged the fact that its countervision of the L.A. reality was itself rooted in a long countertradition—one that wended back from the Manson murders into the noir world of the great crime novelists and filmmakers of the thirties and forties. It's interesting how those noir novelists and filmmakers almost completely inoculated themselves against the blandishments of the light of L.A., in part by setting most of their scenes either at night or indoors—in fact, usually both. One of the distinct charms of such seventies reworkings of the genre as Polanski's "Chinatown" and, even more notably, Altman's "The Long Goodbye" was the way the filmmakers forced their hardened protagonists out into the light of day. (Altman's Marlowe spent the entire film in a perpetual squint, scuttling about like a naked crab summarily wrested from the dark, nestling comfort of its shell.)

GENERALLY speaking, people I spoke with about the light of L.A. tended to fall on one side or the other. There were a few, however, whose responses were decidedly more nuanced.

One such was Don Waldie, whose remarkable book "Holy Days: A Suburban Memoir" I'd been reading on one of my flights out to Los Angeles. Born and raised in Lakewood (a sort of blue-collar West Coast Levittown, row upon row of near-identical frame-and-stucco tract houses laid out in a meticulously even grid just north of Long Beach), Waldie still lives in the community—indeed, in the very house—in which he was reared. In fact, his day job is public-information officer for Lakewood. Waldie doesn't drive, so he has to walk to and from City Hall each day—twenty-five minutes across an unvaryingly regular pattern of perpendicular zigs and zags. It was during such walks that he began composing—one at a time—the hauntingly lyrical, startlingly brief chapters that make up his book.

I resolved to include him in my survey, so as soon as I'd landed in L.A. I placed a call to Lakewood City Hall—he was out—and left a message on his machine. That evening, I got my own personal whiff of his method.

"Ah, yes," he said cheerfully when I reached him at home. "The light around here is quite remarkable, isn't it? In fact, I gave the matter some thought on my walk home this evening. And it seems to me, actually, that there are four—or, anyway, at least four—lights in L.A. To begin with, there's the cruel, actinic light of late July. Its glare cuts piteously through the general shabbiness of Los Angeles. Second comes the nostalgic, golden light of late October. It turns Los Angeles into El Dorado, a city of fool's gold. It's the light William Faulkner—in his story 'Golden Land'—called 'treacherous unbrightness.' It's the light the tourists come for—the light, to be more specific, of unearned nostalgia. Third, there's the gunmetal-gray light of the months between December and July. Summer in Los Angeles doesn't begin until mid-July. In the months before, the light can be as monotonous as Seattle's. Finally comes the light, clear as stone-dry champagne, after a full day of rain.

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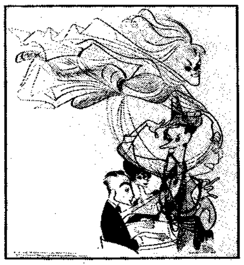

Al Hirschfeld, *High Spirits*, signed and inscribed pen and ink drawing, circa 1970.
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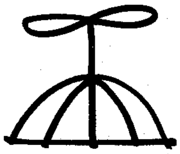
Everything in this light is somehow simultaneously particularized and idealized: each perfect, specific, ideal little tract house, one beside the next. And that’s the light that breaks hearts in L.A.”

That and other lights. One evening, out on the palisade, I was watching the sunset in the company of a theatrical-lighting designer. Actually, we had our backs to the sea—the blush of sky and air and land is somehow even more glorious to the east in L.A. when the sun is setting. “Incredible,” my designer friend marvelled, “the effects He gets with just one unit.”

Incredible, too, the effects Vin Scully gets with just one unit—in his case, his voice. As the legendary radio announcer for the L.A. Dodgers, Scully has spent his life in that light, broadcasting the sunset itself between pitches night after night. (Indeed, it may be thanks to those broadcasts that many Angelenos, including me, first became truly sensitized to the light—and to the light of language as well.) When I reached him by phone, it didn’t take much more than the word “light” to get him launched, rhapsodizing, for instance, about how “come late July, with the sun setting off third base, the air actually turns purple tinged with gold, an awesome sight to behold, the Master Painter at work once again, and, owing to the orientation of the stadium, out beyond center field, you’re staring at the mountains, and mountains beyond mountains, indeed, the purple mountains’ majesty spread out there for everyone to see. And on evenings like that it can get to be like a Frederic Remington or a Charles Russell painting, the dust billowing up from the passing cars on the freeway. If you squint your eyes and only let your imagination soar, it’s as if a herd of wild horses were kicking by.”



As I write, I’m back in New York, exiled from that light. Sixty years ago, it occurs to me, my maternal grandfather, the Austrian Jewish modernist composer Ernst Toch, found himself exiled into that light. He and my grandmother lived on the Franklin Street hill, at the very edge of Santa Monica and Brentwood, north of Wilshire, in a house facing out toward the Santa Monica Mountains. The view from their house, and particularly from the bay window of his composing studio, under the knotty branches of a spreading coral tree and out over the Brentwood Golf Course, was incredibly lovely, especially at the golden hour. (Come to think of it, maybe *that’s* where I first became smitten with this thing about the light of Southern California.) Occasionally, my grandparents would entertain guests up there. They’d meander around the grounds and through the house and eventually into his studio, approaching his desk—wedged up against that magnificent bay window, with its enthralling light-filled view—and invariably somebody would crack wise, saying something along the lines of “Well, no wonder you can compose, with a view like that!”

At which point, invariably, my grandfather would respond, “Well, actually, no. When I compose, I have to close the curtains.” ♦

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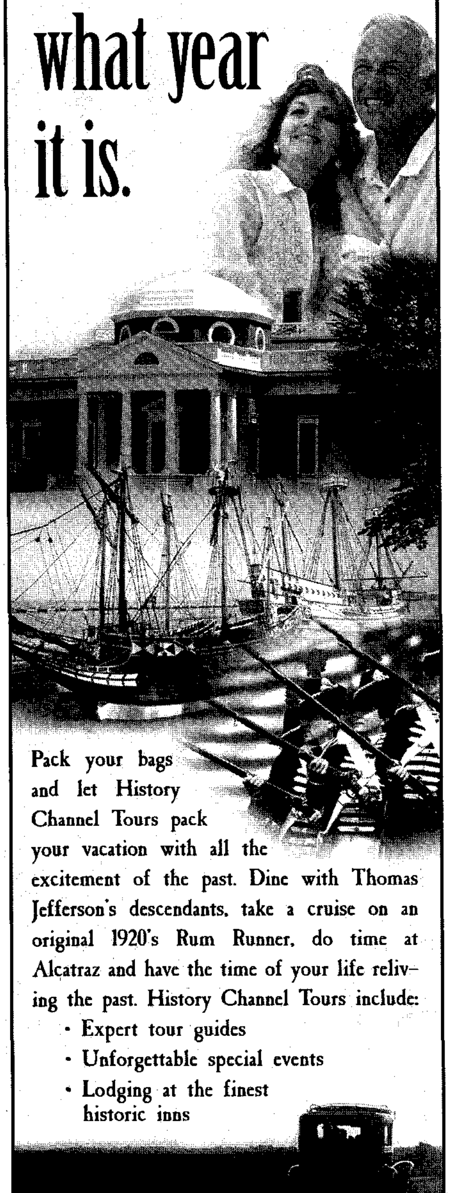

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REFLECTIONS

THAT WAS THEN

Why is Los Angeles so hard to remember?

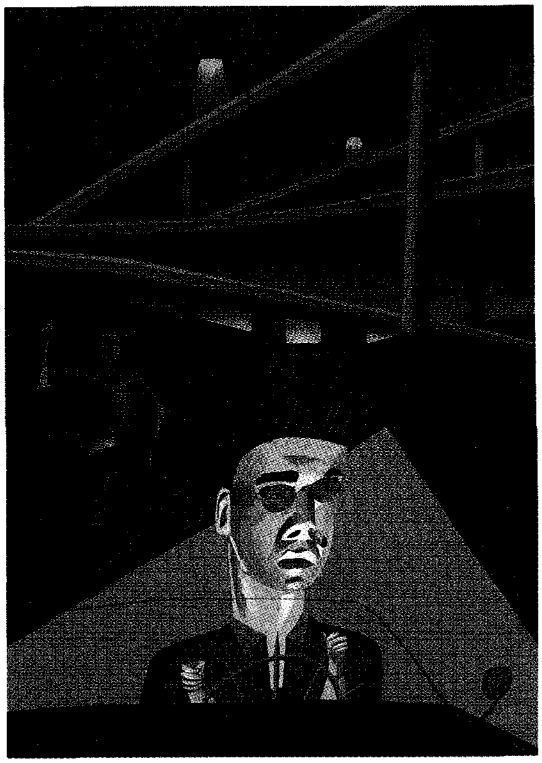
BY MICHAEL TOLKIN

IN 1966, we lived on the wrong side of Beverly Hills, near Olympic Boulevard, but we had good cars: a white 1957 T-bird and a 1965 Lincoln, the color of champagne. We had the Thunderbird because my father had seen Gary Cooper get out of one at the Beverly Hills Hotel, when the car was new.

I was sixteen, and I think I used the T-bird—not the Lincoln, which was my mother's car—when I drove around looking for pornography. But it was easy to take either one for a few hours on a weekend afternoon, and back then I could cover a lot of the city in a two-hour trip. The weekend emptiness was wildly provocative. To take Beverly Boulevard or Olympic past downtown and into the deserted industrial zones, or to press south on La Brea—this was already a form of pornography. In those days, I was reading Ray Bradbury, Mark Twain, E. E. Cummings, Alan Watts, Ian Fleming, Poe, Conan Doyle, the New American Library, and whatever dirty books I could get someone to sell me—the only title I remember is "Our Man from Sadisto."

To buy porn, I had to find it, and what I liked more than the porn itself was the way the search brought me deep into Los Angeles. The lives of the people I passed seemed to flower in a world of eternally baffled aspirations, which suggested a battle of choices between despair and satisfaction, which suggested rampant desire or rampant anxiety, which suggested a culture of lust. The dirty-book stores, scattered throughout the city, suggested a vent of understanding into this other world, and it was the promise of this other world that interested me—a world I believed to be wherever Beverly Hills was not.

The entrance to it was in places like Hawthorne, Redondo Beach, and Downey. I was sure that in these towns of such invisible enterprise people lived according to a porn ethos. This was where the swingers lived, in low-ceilinged garden apartments filled with nurses and directory-assistance operators who had no inner lives to give them grief. So I drove around, content and excited by just seeing people on the city's long boulevards, with wide median dividers where the train tracks had been, lined by car dealer, garage, car dealer, body shop, dirty-book store, bait shop, Denny's, garage, garage, liquor store, and for every quarter mile no more than three people on sidewalks so devoid of color that the sensory deprivation of a twenty-yard walk along them still leaves me shaking. But when I liked it here—and I don't



Everything was numb, but the numbness was pleasant.

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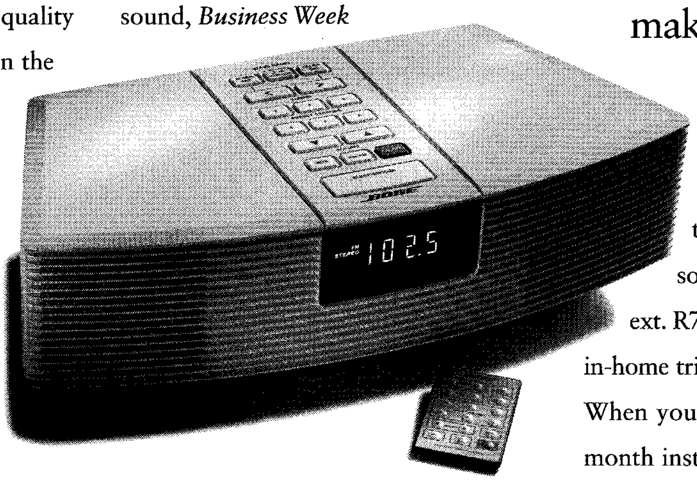

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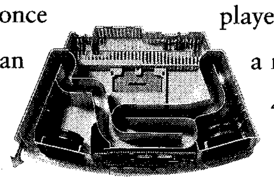

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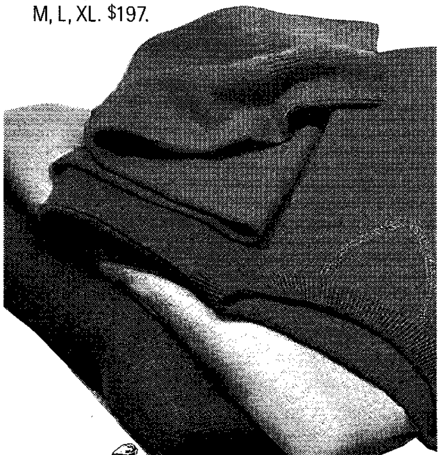

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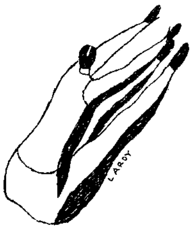
think I do anymore—I liked how strange this was. It was as interesting as Paris, and as lovable.

I never went looking for porn on good days, I mean on days when the weather was good. When the weather was good, I went sailing with my father, or took the boat out with my friends. We had a twenty-five-foot sloop built by California Yachts; it was the equivalent of a Chevy Impala, efficient with just enough style for self-respect. My father, who was born in Odessa a year before the Revolution, called it the Potemkin, but we never had the name painted on the stern.

I WENT looking for dirty movies only when the city and the sea—with the radio off, without a soundtrack, without sun—were like each other, vistas of perpetually blunted desolation, the unhappiness muffled by an emptiness that felt as though the sea went nowhere, the earth were flat, and the city had been abandoned, or had been built in expectation of a migration that chose another place. I remember one day when I had the T-bird and took Beverly Boulevard all the way downtown and parked in a lot off Broadway. I gave the key to a Mexican, I bought a ticket to a Swedish movie, and I was alone.

I can't imagine now how I came to know about the film, what review promised a dirty Swedish movie, because it isn't likely that the L.A. *Times* reviewed pornography, but it wasn't a dirty film, it was a Scandinavian playboy-and-stewardess comedy like "Boeing-Boeing" (1965; directed by John Rich, with Tony Curtis and Jerry Lewis). There was only one promising scene. The stewardess left a penthouse bedroom to undress, a man did pushups on the floor, the stewardess came back in, they kissed on the bed, the scene changed. I didn't stay to the end. I ate lunch in a Japanese café on First Street in Little Tokyo, and I remember as I sat at the counter a feeling that came to me of the sure knowledge that what was unhappy and simultaneously fulfilled would never change, and would die only when I died, an isolation I observed from a higher isolation—one isolation keeping the other company. This is my foundation experience of Los Angeles.



After lunch, I think I drove over to a stretch of Western Avenue near Santa Monica Boulevard, to a dirty-book store next to the movie theatre that played Warhol's films and the Batman serial. But the store wouldn't let me in, because I was too young.

I WENT East when I was eighteen and didn't come back for ten years. I liked the city a lot more in 1981, driving at night on cocaine, which helped make sense of things. The freeways after dark emptied of all but seemingly two kinds of traffic—decent people, on their way home or to the night shift, and the rest of us. In the living paradoxes of cocaine—the calm panic, the happy misery, the paranoid confidence—the city revealed itself, and it was a city I loved, a fragmentary city that needed only a chemically shifted attitude to flower into poignant definition. It wasn't that cocaine altered only the internal perspective, granting the soul applause for effort without accomplishment; it also made the long drives between towns more than easy to bear. It made them psychic journeys, sitting walkabouts, vision quests. This was still a version of the city you can see in that shot in "The Godfather" when Tom Hagen comes here to force Jack Woltz to give Johnny Fontane a part in his movie—a low city with fast-moving traffic.

These were the last days of that city, which was soon to be killed by the Beverly Center and Johnny Rockets, and Los Angeles wore a pessimism worthy of the name then. It was a true, sexy, radical pessimism, an aggressive pessimism finally optimistic in its sure love of doom. It was made from cocaine; the Talking Heads album "Fear of Music," with the diamond-plate cover; the name of Wim Wenders's film company, Gray City Films, which said everything; *Slash* magazine; back issues of *Wet* magazine; the bands X, Fear, Suburban Lawns, the Blasters, and Los Lobos; the B-52's opening for the Talking Heads in an epic show at the Greek Theatre; Madame Wong's; and Lady Snow, the Tiffany's of head shops, at the corner of Crescent Heights and Sunset. This corner is now the entrance to the garage at

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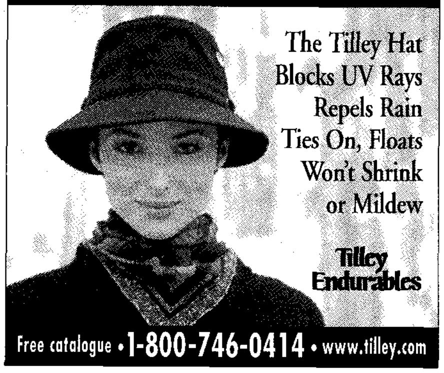

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At two in the morning at Lady Snow, dealers waited patiently in a line as full of amiable anticipation as the line at Tommy's Burgers, except that everyone was a felon. You could buy pounds of baby laxative for cutting cocaine in bulk, triple-beam scales for weighing it, and cocaine strainers made by Deering Precision Instruments, in its trademark color, a pretty, pale celadon. The best toys sold there were these clever little plastic or metal things called bullets, from their shape—a cone coming to a point small enough for a nostril—and from what they did, because they delivered a shot of cocaine. They were threaded inside, to be screwed to the top of brown vials filled with coke. Turn the vial upside down, rotate a handle on the bullet, and transfer one line's worth of coke to the open end. Bullets were especially useful on the road.

This was during the time when everything was numb, but the numbness was pleasant, the numbness expressed a harmonic correspondence with the vibrations of a city whose depths of dread and despair were unknowable except through degradation. Shattering coherence, cocaine reorganized what was *freshly random into a new level of occult* significance. My dealer was a chiropractor. His grandfather had been a bootlegger. Under the influence, a celebration could be made of this knowledge.

THIS is a hard city for holding memories. The absence of real seasons makes time pass without easy markers, and the loss of real politics surrenders us to the arrhythmia of riot, scandal, and natural disaster. The sad, brilliant beauty of the place, the January sky after the rains, with snow on the San Gabriels and every thin wire on the radio towers of Mt. Wilson visible thirty miles away, or the city at night, seen from a plane as it comes in over San Bernardino, or the crowds of Hispanics in Griffith Park on a Sunday afternoon; these and a million other impressions have been stripped of specific local truth by all the movies set here arbitrarily by Hollywood. Those who come here to make a living by telling movie stories

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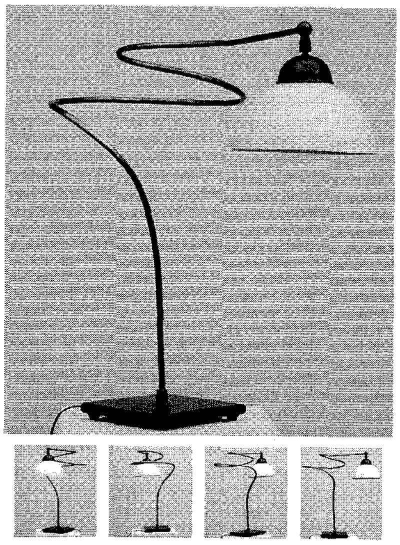

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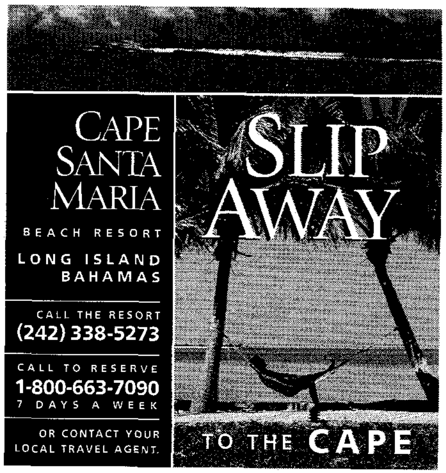

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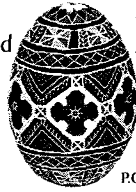

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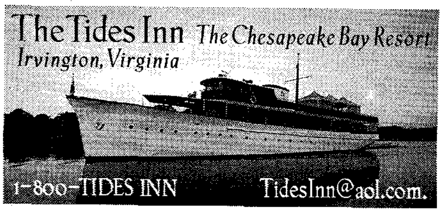
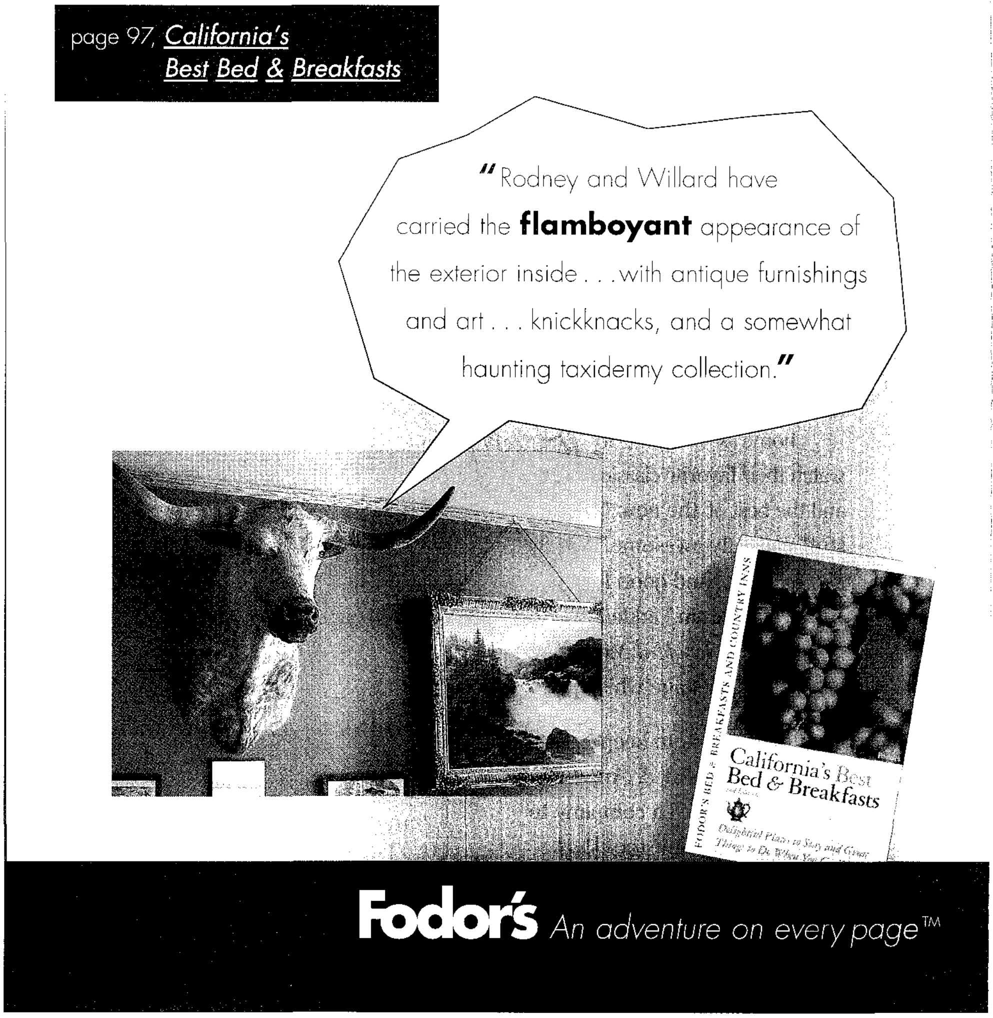


don't think much about the place, and those who grew up here barely make the truth of the city known to one another. For a city to produce a great novel, more than a few people have to agree about the city, and Los Angeles does not offer a clear harmonizing of its themes. This is why our literature fits onto a short shelf, and why the movies can grow here, unencumbered by a shared social history. Of course I'm complaining to myself for not having made enough sense of that time to write the novel, but, like everyone else awake at two in the morning, I was wrecked.

But, if we didn't have great fiction, at least we had great music. The On Club, on Sunset, down to Jett's, in Compton, up to Pasadena for a place that lasted one night, finish at the Zero Zero, on Cahuenga. The best club of all was Jett's. There bands from Hollywood played alongside bands from Long Beach and the South Bay, which is remarkable only because this is not a city where one routinely meets people from all of its parts. If this had been Paris or London, the club would still be alive and famous, books would have been written about it, memoirs. Jett's lasted a few months, relocated to a loft downtown, and then who knows? This is where I heard the amazing Su Tissue and Suburban Lawns. Her signature song was "Flying Saucer Safari," about looking for U.F.O.s in the desert cities Banning, Blythe, and Indio, and just hearing these names, hearing in these lost clubs songs about a local, specific Los Angeles instead of a generic city on a TV cop show, was redemption. This was inspiration; a great novel might yet be written if a song could take the I-10 for granted the way the world takes Central Park or the Champs-Élysées or the Nevsky Prospect for granted, those real places that exist for everyone because someone saw them and loved them. For whom does Blythe exist? When Su Tissue made those towns true for the universe, or when Exene Cervenka, of X, made Los Angeles a lyric, they gave us the promise of a city that might yet become great on its own terms.

On some Monday nights, I drove with my bullets to a basement in Pasadena, where the Filmforum showed experimental movies. I took my drugs and sat in the theatre and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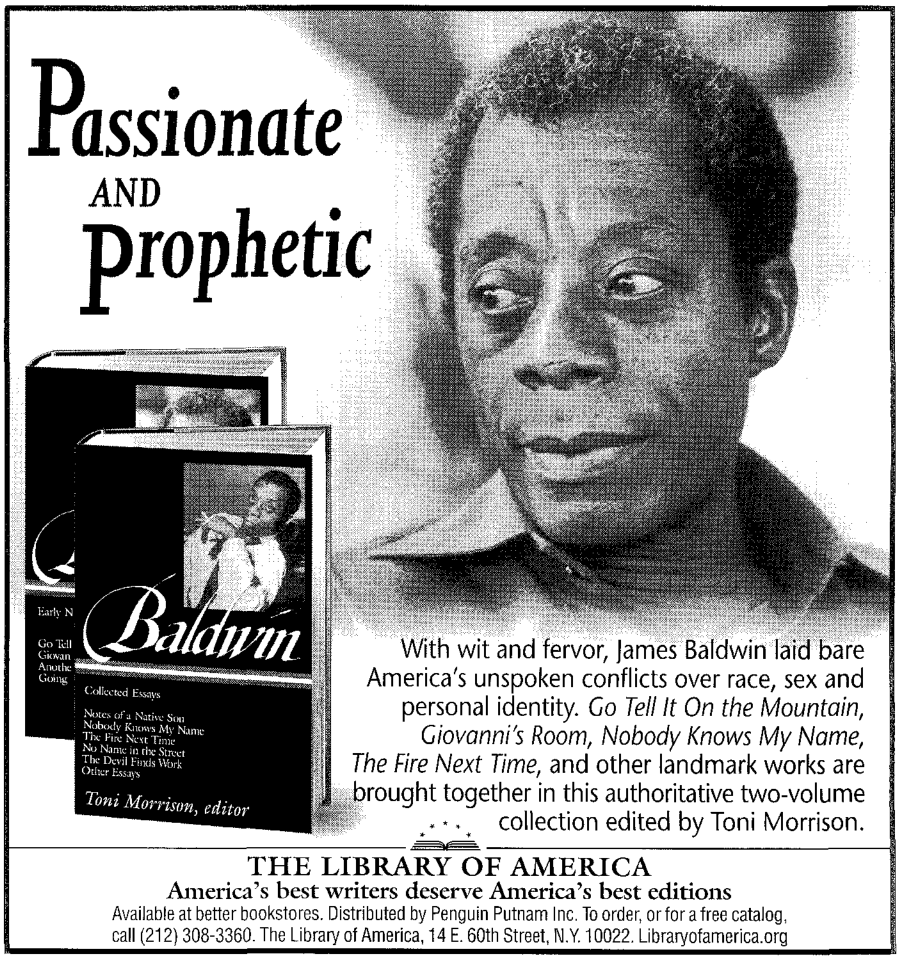
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watched a flow of images untied from narrative. The audience was always small, never more than fifteen or twenty. The director of the place ran an auto-parts catalogue business. We were all there for the love of abstract cinema; this was still in the glory days of 16-mm. and Super-8 film, before videotape and the VCR, only 1981 or 1982—a Bronze Age! The lessons of those abstract films, cut-and-pastes, rhythm studies, the passing shadows that a train casts on the trees beside the tracks, Stan Brakhage's films of his family, all this indulgence in the need to put something on film which was deliberately poison to commercial value—this flow of images without a story was comforting, a node of purposeful meaninglessness. At this time, I had not made a film or had a film produced. Which way would I go? I needed this, as a consolation to frustrated ambition.

Toward the end of my binge, I went to a Filmforum party at a small house in Long Beach. In the kitchen, someone was showing off a piece of art. On a roll of adding-machine paper, both ends threaded onto small spools, in colored pencil, he had drawn an epic panorama, the life and death of a civilization. The work was placed within a frame made of thin wood, either balsa or popsicle sticks, so tiny, an inch high, two inches wide, roughly the scale of a movie screen; he cranked one spool and the adding-machine tape rolled through the frame, and a world was born, lived, and died. This was the Los Angeles of people who seemed happy, people on a circuit of freeways different from mine.

Then the money ran out, the cocaine ran out. I woke up for a few months every morning at five, to go to a telemarketing boiler room on the tenth floor of a building on Wilshire, just west of Crescent Heights. In those days, this was a bottom job on the English major's ladder of self-respect. The L.A. *Weekly* carried ads promising a thousand dollars a week, and when you showed up there were hundreds of applicants, of every race, and it was a terrible scene. Here were the colored poor trying hard to find some way to a paycheck, and here were a bunch of whites who'd thrown it all away. You had to have a good clean speaking voice if you wanted to make any money, no accent. So the blacks, the Asians, the Salvadorans running from the civil war were out on the street again, leaving the white addicts and a few actors of color. We looked at each other—how did we get here? We all had the same answer.

The people we worked for were graduates of a motivational seminar, and they were insane, and not cute about it. We were selling cheap pens in exchange for a chance to win trips, televisions, and heirloom-quality grandfather clocks. The postal authorities could have arrested us all. There were no trips or televisions, and the clocks were made of fibreboard and ran on batteries. Some people made a few thousand dollars a week. I never did.

I missed an office party in Topanga one Saturday night; on Monday morning, everyone was laughing about it. They'd sat around the kitchen making prank calls.

On the first day, the sales manager had addressed the candidates. He said, "When was the last time anyone in this room had a real vacation?"

A woman raised her hand. "I did, two weeks ago. I went to Pittsfield to visit my parents."

"And who paid for the ticket?"

"My parents."

He screamed at her. "Pittsfield? Pittsfield? That's not a vacation. I'm talking about Acapulco, Margaritas, sex. I'm talking about room service! When was the last time anyone in this room made love in a hotel room with the sound of the ocean outside?"

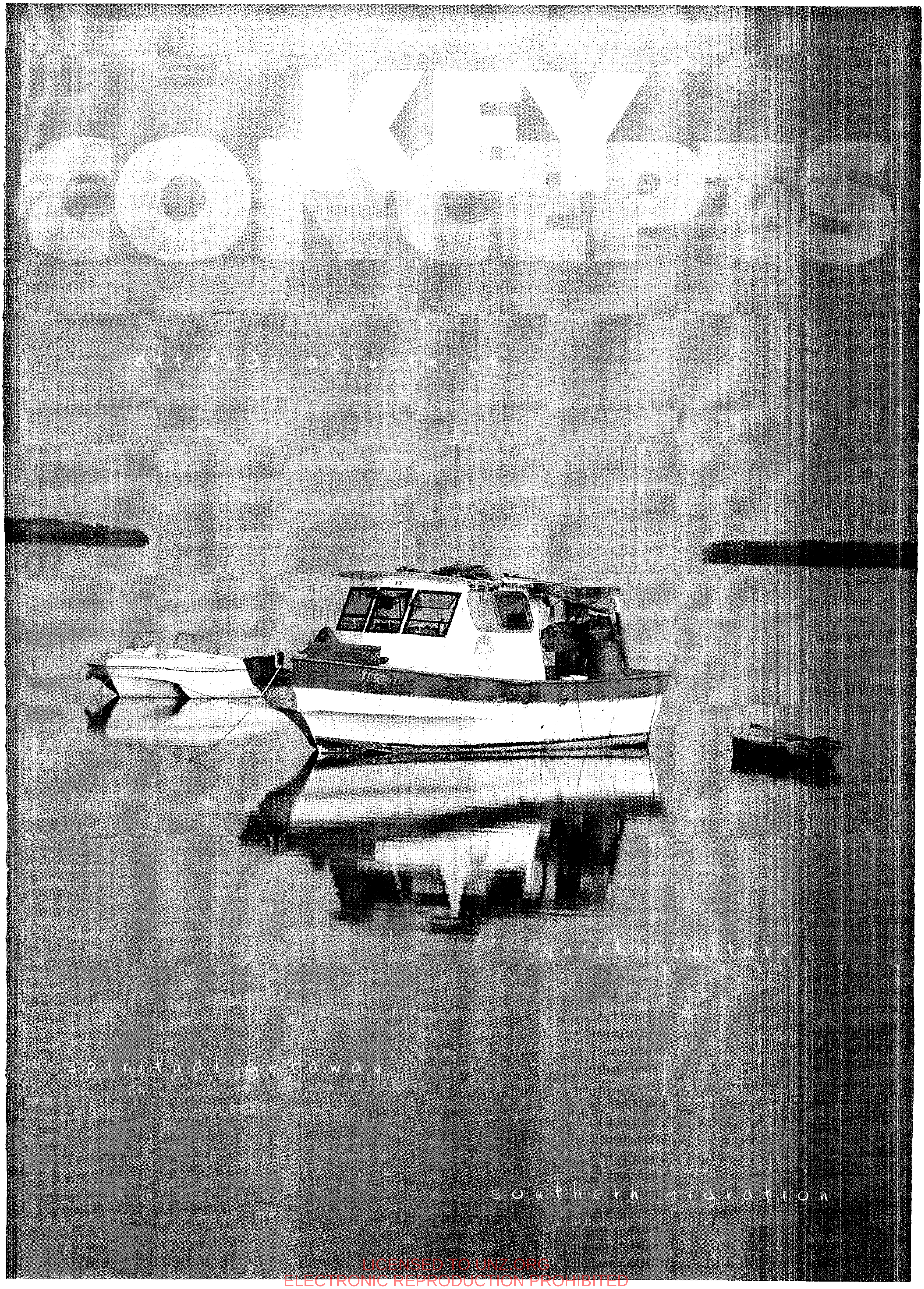
Ten years later, I put the scene in "The New Age," the second film I directed. I gave the speech to Sam Jackson. The boiler-room scene was a small part of the movie, and, by coincidence, I shot it three buildings west of where it had happened.

I have more stories, but they're hard to tell. ♦

DOUBLE GRAVE at Ocean View Cemetery, $1,800. Owners have moved.—*Adv. in the Eureka* (*Calif.*) *Times-Standard.*

There goes the neighborhood.

KEY CONCEPTS



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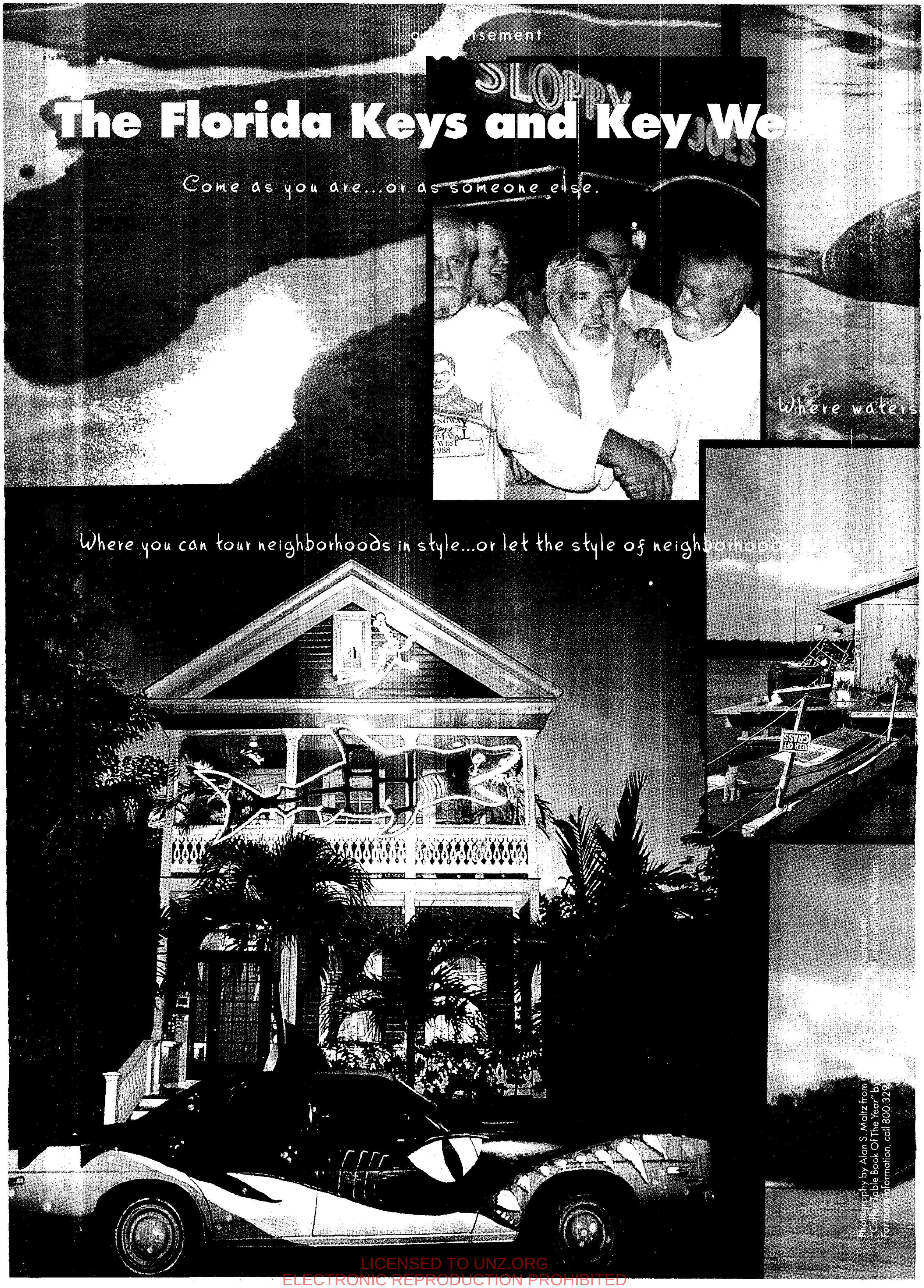
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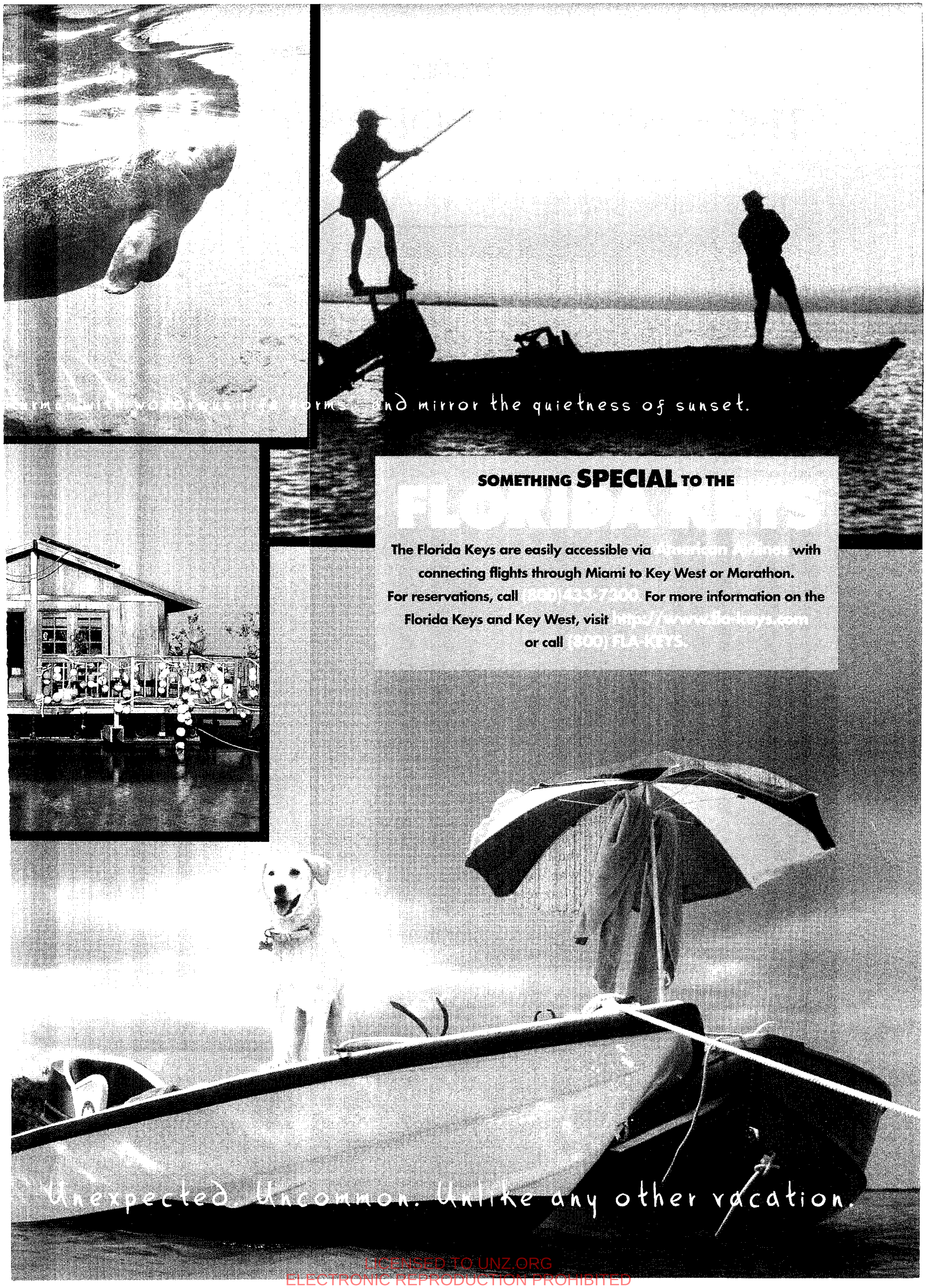
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PROFILE

THE MANY LIVES OF DAVID GEFFEN

Billions of dollars and decades of hits later, L.A.'s impresario of cool is reinventing the role of the Hollywood mogul.

BY JOHN SEABROOK

I—THE RELATIONSHIP ECONOMY

DAVID GEFFEN peeled a Post-it from a pad that was sitting on the coffee table in front of him and folded it into a square. He performed this meaningless action with considerable care. The boredom in his eyes, which seemed on the verge of spilling over into other parts of his face, was held in check by his lively eyebrows. It was as though all the enthusiasm that those eyebrows have had to express over the years for all the talented people whom Geffen has absolutely adored had left run-off deposits of residual boredom in his lower eyelids.

Voices came from the outer office. Geffen raised his head. The boredom seemed to drain back into his skull.

"Does somebody want me?" he called out.

"David, we want you as badly as anything we've ever wanted in our lives," said a DreamWorks executive named Terry Press (there are no titles at DreamWorks), striding into the room ahead of her boss, Jeffrey Katzenberg, and the music-industry legend Mo Ostin, who now runs the music division of DreamWorks.

Geffen got up from his armchair, one of four identical white chairs around a low table. He has not worked behind a desk since his early days at the William Morris Agency, in the mid-sixties. In the presence of Katzenberg, a cheerful man dressed in preppy clothes, he became playful and affectionate. When I asked Geffen, on another occasion, why he wanted to be involved with running a movie studio (in 1991 he had said, "I would kill myself—I can't think of a more horrible job"), he told me he'd done it partly out of friendship for Katzenberg. "I was standing up for Jeffrey." Katzenberg had had a rancorous parting from his former boss, Michael Eisner, of Disney. "I'm a stand-up guy. I can be counted on by my friends. And I'm proud of that and I feel good about that." Although the founding of DreamWorks SKG, which involved two billion dollars of other people's money (and $33.3 million each from the three partners, Geffen, Katzenberg, and Steven Spielberg), was, to be sure, an adult undertaking, there was a boyish spirit in the enterprise which seemed to be important to its self-image.

The two friends chatted about Bill Clinton, who had been in L.A. over the weekend and had departed that morning. On an earlier visit to L.A., the President had eaten dinner at Geffen's house, in Malibu, an unpretentious series of small buildings on the beach, and on this occasion he had wanted to stay there. Geffen, for his part, had stayed at the White House more than once. The three-way relationship that is DreamWorks was, in a sense, consummated in the Lincoln Bedroom, after a state dinner for Boris Yeltsin in 1994, when Geffen was awakened at one-thirty in the morning by a call from Katzenberg and Spielberg—they had been relegated to the Hay-Adams Hotel for the night—who said to Geffen, "Let's do this." More recently, Geffen had attended the state dinner for the President of China, and his had been one of two names without affiliation on the *Times'* list of guests: not David Geffen, DreamWorks, or David Geffen, art collector, or David Geffen, philanthropist, or David Geffen, prominent gay man; just David Geffen. That was oddly appropriate for the only man in the history of American cultural capitalism who has succeeded in three different industries—popular music, Broadway, and Hollywood—but whose only long-term project through the years has been himself.

I asked if proximity to the President was exciting. Geffen demurred, batted his eyelashes. Perhaps it had been, once. It was old hat now. "Let me put it this way," he said, resting his hand on his heart, raising his eyes, and giving me his dead-on, sincere look. "I am delighted to have a *relationship* with the President of the United States. I can't tell you I don't *val*-ue that greatly. But, I mean, you know, I'm not blown away by anybody."

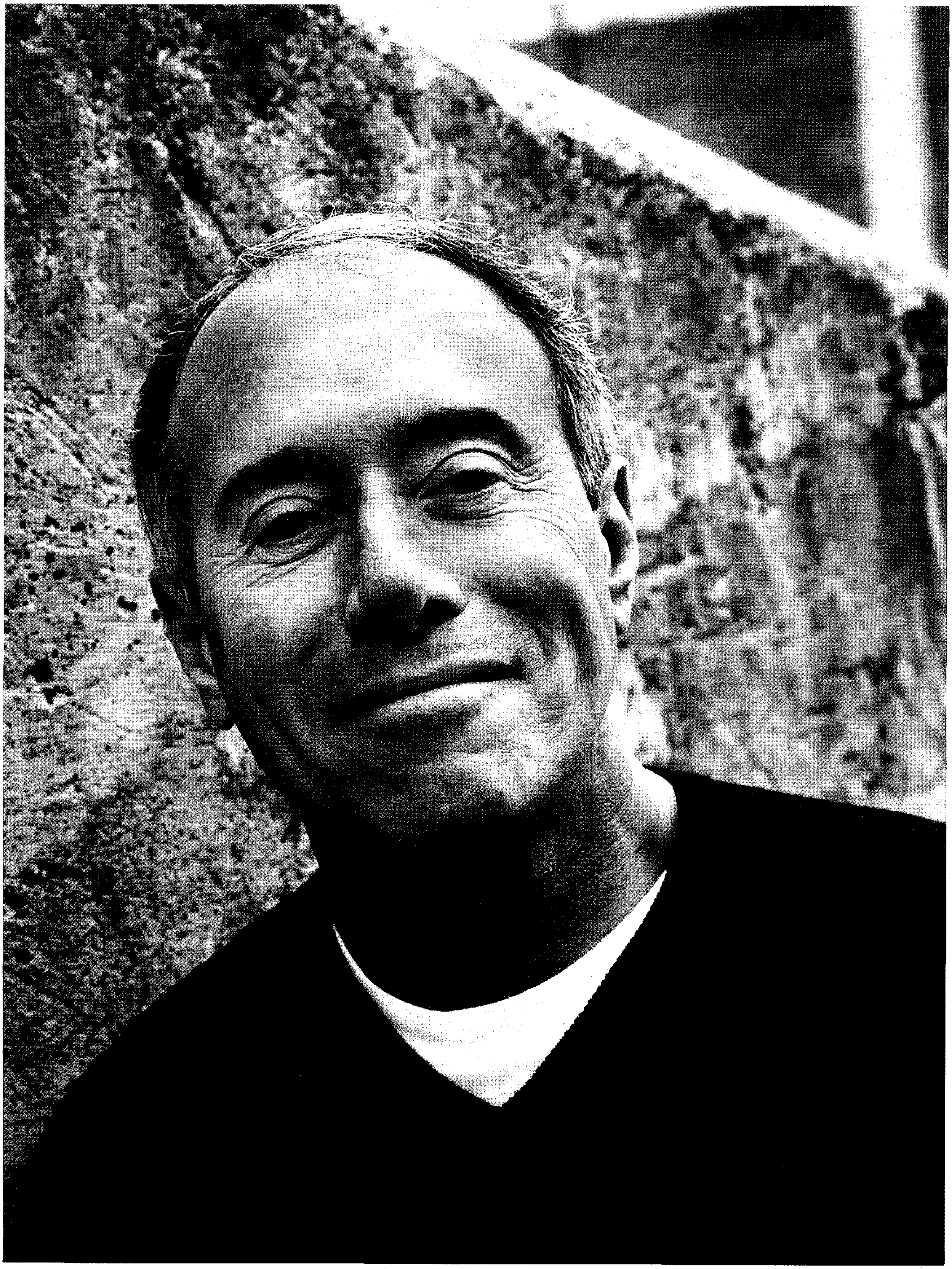
Geffen hadn't been able to put the President up. "So I called Jeffrey and I said, 'Jeff-*rey*, I think the President should stay in *your* house,'" he told me. Katzenberg, who has a house a short stroll down the beach from Geffen's, agreed. Then, on Saturday night, Geffen went over to Katzenberg's for dinner and a movie ("The Rainmaker") with the President.

Clinton had loved the house, Katzenberg now told Geffen, and he wanted to know whether Hillary could stay there next week, and he also wanted to talk to Charles Gwathmey (who built Katzenberg's house) about designing the Clinton Library. Geffen recounted his morning phone call with the President for Katzenberg. "He said to me, 'How come Jeffrey's house is so much nicer than yours? I thought he was the one who doesn't have any money.' That's what he said to me. 'I thought he was broke.' I said, 'Well, "broke" is a Hollywood term!'"

Katzenberg chortled. Geffen cried "Ohhh!" in a pained way, as though the effort of enduring such happiness had exhausted him. He sank back into his chair, spent.

Then Terry Press turned to Geffen and, with an air of getting down to business, asked, mock coquettishly, "Are you going to be my date in Washington?"

The DreamWorks movie "Amistad" was to have its première in the nation's capital in early December, a few weeks away, befitting what Spielberg had described as "an extraordinarily important film, perhaps my most important film



David Geffen photographed by Helmut Newton in Los Angeles in 1998. "Most people don't know how to get paid. That's an art. Geffen taught people that," Jimmy Iovine of Interscope Records says.

ever." Geffen seemed to me to be keeping his distance from the movie—perhaps his gut was telling him that "Amistad" wasn't going to be the "Schindler's List" the company was counting on, or perhaps it was simply his old strategy of remaining in the background of the talent. Although Geffen's relationships with moguls have by and large replaced the relationships he used to have with artists, he plays the same role he always played—little David Geffen from Brooklyn, catering to the needs of moody and petulant stars. He uses the reversal of authority to his advantage.

"I'm not going," Geffen said.

"What do you mean, you're not going?" Press asked, her smile brightening ironically.

"I *don't* want to go. I'm going to Acapulco for a vacation." Geffen's job at DreamWorks did not seem to take up an inordinate amount of his time. With Spielberg to supervise the live-action movies, Katzenberg to manage the company and oversee animation, and Mo Ostin to handle the music, Geffen could work with the investment bankers, play devil's advocate, and float.

"What the hell do I have to be in Washington for? You don't need *me*. Let Jeffrey be there with Steven. I was there with Jeffrey last time." Geffen's eyes were turning the color of deep umbrage, and his face showed a flash of the quality that makes him, in the words of a friend, "one of the worst people in the world to get into an argument with."

Press looked over at Katzenberg and gave him a "Whaddaya want me to do?" look, and Katzenberg gave her a "Whaddaya want me to tell ya?" shrug back.

Press turned to Geffen again. "So, basically, what you're saying," she went on, "is that you'll go to Washington for the Chinese dinner but you won't go for the company."

"*Yes!*" said Geffen, almost yelling. "There's a big fucking difference between going to the première of a movie and—"

"The premier of China?" Katzenberg put in brightly, putting his hand on his cheek and smiling, Jack Benny style. "They're both premiers. What's the big deal?"

THE matter was unresolved. After they departed, Geffen peeled another Post-it and performed the same meditative folding ritual as before. "I know how to quiet my mind," he had said on another occasion, when I had asked if he meditated. "I do it at different times. When I find myself becoming—what's the word?—out of sorts." He also spoke about learning to silence "the voices in my head," which I understood to be the old desire for personal advantage—an instinct that he could never entirely turn off, no matter how generous and selfless he was trying to be.

Geffen sat upright in his chair, back straight, head up. He was dressed in his usual uniform: Reeboks (Classics), jeans, and a Puma T-shirt under a flannel shirt. His flannel shirt actually looked nicer than something you'd find at the Gap—a relative sartorial flourish. ("One thing about David," the producer Lynda Obst says, "he made it impossible to be underdressed in Hollywood.") Nothing in the room seemed fancy or rich-looking. The aura of extreme power was made even stronger by the absolute absence of any of the trappings of power. "David doesn't respond to his environment the way most people do," the author Fran Lebowitz, who is one of Geffen's friends, told me. "Like, he lives on the beach, but he never swims in the ocean. And yet when he goes on vacation it's almost always on boats, and we'll go, like, eight million miles just to get to a beach that looks like the one he just left. And he *still* doesn't swim in the ocean."

With a personal fortune of more than two billion dollars, much of which came from the sale of Geffen Records to MCA, and the subsequent sale of MCA to Matsushita, Geffen is perhaps the most powerful man in Hollywood, both widely admired for his entrepreneurial spirit and widely feared for his guile and his anger. He is not a strategic or a systematic thinker. Like the old-time moguls, Geffen makes decisions as much with the gut as with the brain. In the increasingly corporate world of global entertainment, Geffen is a throwback to a more individualistic era. He's the free man in Paris, in the words of the song Joni Mitchell once wrote about him. Jimmy Iovine, who has enjoyed Geffenesque success at Interscope Records, told me, "David's not afraid. We all know that he's really smart and really talented, but he's also not afraid, or if he is he doesn't show it. He's more than willing to put all the chips on something he really believes in. And that doesn't exist in the record business anymore. Because most people are afraid for their jobs, of the impact someone else can have on them."

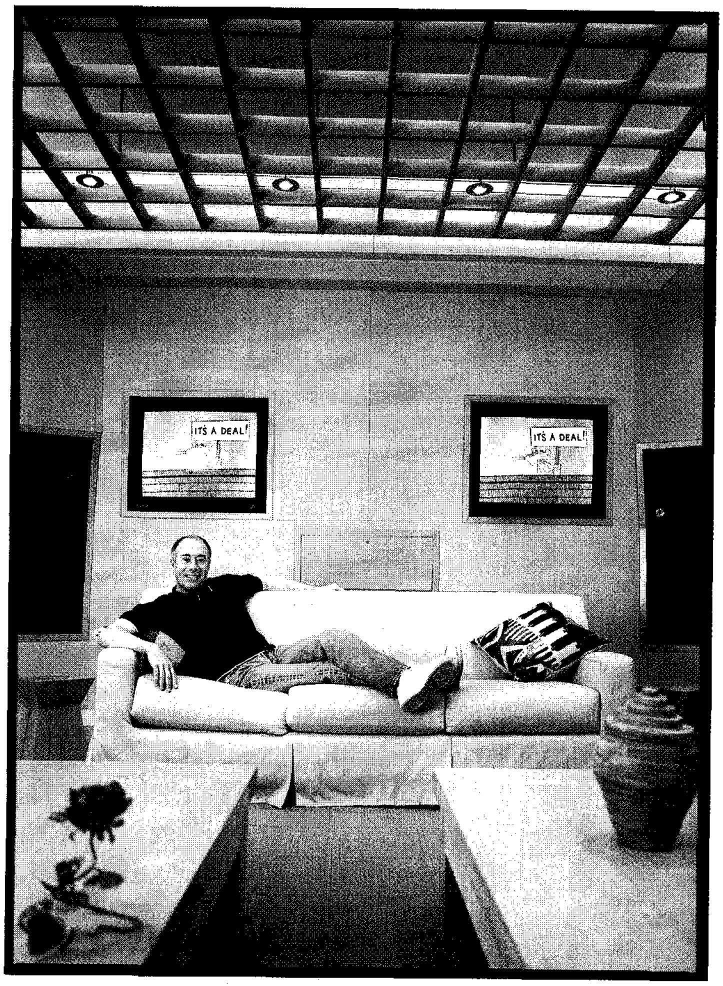
THE phone rang. With a slight, smooth turn of his head, Geffen took in a little green screen that displayed the caller's name and number, then looked back at me. On the phone were twenty speed-dial buttons, next to which were the names of people Geffen speaks to every day, often between six and nine in the morning L.A. time: Katzenberg; Spielberg; Edgar Bronfman, Jr., and Ron Meyer, of MCA; Calvin Klein; Paul Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft; Allen Grubman, an entertainment lawyer; and Barry Diller, among others. If Geffen may be said to have invented anything, it is an economy based on the rapid exchange of information across a network small enough to fit on a speed dial—a network in which you have a market interest in the information but are also motivated by a genuine personal connection. "David would never say, 'I'm in business with you,'" says Tom Freston, the chairman of MTV Networks. "He would say, 'We've got a relationship.' He got started in the music business when it was much more of a personal business. And one of his strengths is that he's a very personable guy. As the world has conglomerated, David has carried on making personal relationships. And it works."

What Geffen puts into his relationship economy is advice. He combines a mogul's long view with a music-industry *macher's* sense of competition and the bottom line. "There's no one alive that I know who has more of an ability for focussing and intuiting business than David Geffen has," I was told by Barry Diller. "He has as close to perfect pitch as anyone I know. His ability to focus and his instinct for what business is, across almost any range of businesses—certainly not limited to entertainment or music, or whatever—is remarkable." When I asked Diller if Geffen had any weaknesses as a businessman, he thought for five seconds and then replied, "No. None. Zero." When Calvin Klein's business got into a "terrible jam," in the early nineties, Klein told me, Geffen analyzed the company and told him how to restructure it. Among other things, he advised Klein to sell his underwear-and-jeans business, and personally negotiated a deal with Linda Wachner, of Warnaco. Geffen also bought the immediately outstanding bonds, to give Klein time to regroup.

Geffen even shares his advice with competitors. Guy Oseary, a twenty-five-year-old partner in Maverick Records, which is Madonna's company, told me, "I don't make too many decisions without calling him. Whether or not I agree with him, I'd like to know his take on things. He's definitely my guru in many ways. Why not? He's the smartest guy who has ever touched this business. He doesn't mind giving me the info. I'd say it's thirty per cent about the business and seventy per cent personal. Advice on personal relationships, seeing a movie, having dinner—it's not, like, just about work. I call him Rabbi Dave."

When you become part of Geffen's relationship economy, however briefly, it seems as if there were nothing he wouldn't do for you. Geffen is always available to friends. "Hold on, I'll get him," his assistant says, and then there is a short pause while the call is transferred somewhere, maybe to the beach, maybe to Paris, maybe to the middle of the ocean, where Geffen is sitting very quietly on the back of a yacht with a cell phone and a trashy novel.

But if you displease Geffen you find yourself immediately denied his munificence, and may also find yourself on the outs with his innermost circle of friends. Rose Tarlow, an antiques dealer who has worked on several of Geffen's houses, says, "If David's been your friend, and then you do something and he's no longer your friend—I feel sorry for those people. He withdraws his love, and you're missing something precious." Howard Rosenman, a Hollywood producer who is a former Geffen friend, says that Geffen never practiced any kind of active vengeance against him; he simply cooled. "David hates me," Rosenman said to me over breakfast one morning, "but I love him. He was good to me, but I didn't appreciate it at the time. David felt that I betrayed him, and he was right. I let my own anger and resentment stand in the way of all he had done for me." He took a bite of his bagel and lox, and went on, "David is very Old Testament. He's not New Testament. He's trying to be New Testament. Lifespring, est, and A Course in Miracles are all part of David's attempt to temper the god of vengeance and anger with forgiveness and mercy. And it's worked, to a degree."


IT'S A DEAL!
IT'S A DEAL!

Geffen in his DreamWorks office: "We would all rather die than fail." Photograph by Max Vadukul.

THE sun faded on the palm trees outside the window. Geffen used the phrase "at the end of the day" a lot in talking about his life. "At the end of the day, no one's powerful. You know? If you work for Rupert Murdoch, you can say he's powerful, but he's not powerful to me. I don't give a shit about Rupert Murdoch." At fifty-four, Geffen was like the Woody Allen and Tony Roberts characters in "Annie Hall" rolled into one. He was a hybrid of East Coast and West Coast manners. Geffen is not actually laid back—one makes that mistake at one's peril—but his years of pursuing New Age experiments in consciousness-raising have burnished him in the copper-colored light of a guru. When Marianne Williamson was in vogue, Geffen rode around town listening to an audiotape of her lectures. "David has an untrained mind," one longtime observer of Geffen told me. "And he's a searcher, like all his friends. He's searching for control. When Werner Erhard came along, he went for that hook, line, and sinker, and a lot of his psychology comes from est. Gurus come to town, and if you're rich enough you can get private access. After all, if you're a mogul you should be able to buy enlightenment."

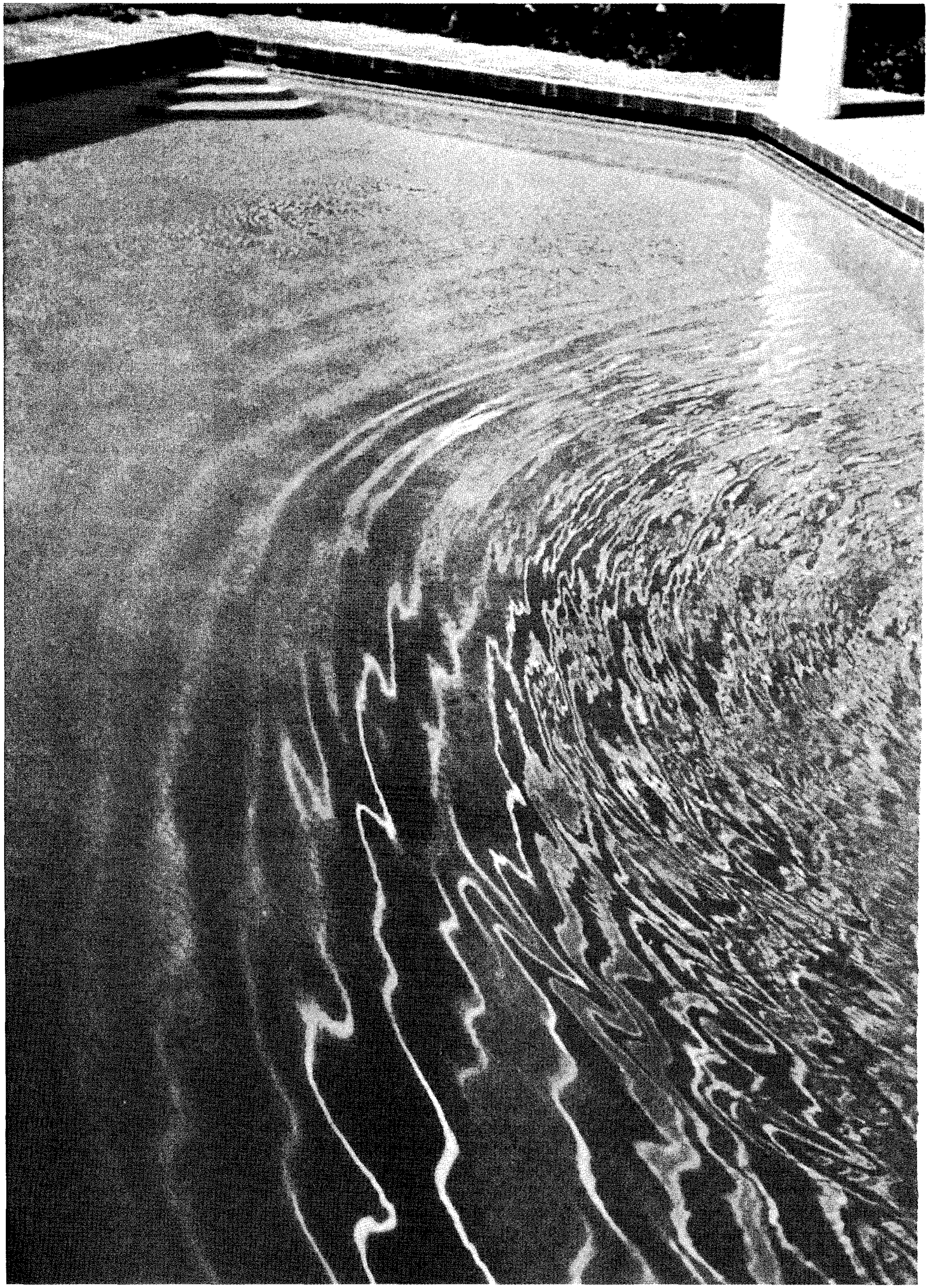
On this late-fall day in Beverly Hills, Geffen's thirty-five years in the culture industry, from agent to manager and on to label owner and movie mogul and billionaire, seemed but a distant sound of lyres and flutes. Unmoored from all institutional responsibilities, Geffen seemed on the verge of floating away. He had reached a level of capitalism so pure that it was almost evanescent. "You know, it's hard for me to explain to you what I've done, even in the past, let alone today," he told me. "You have an idea of the way you think it is, and it's not that way at all, it's something else."

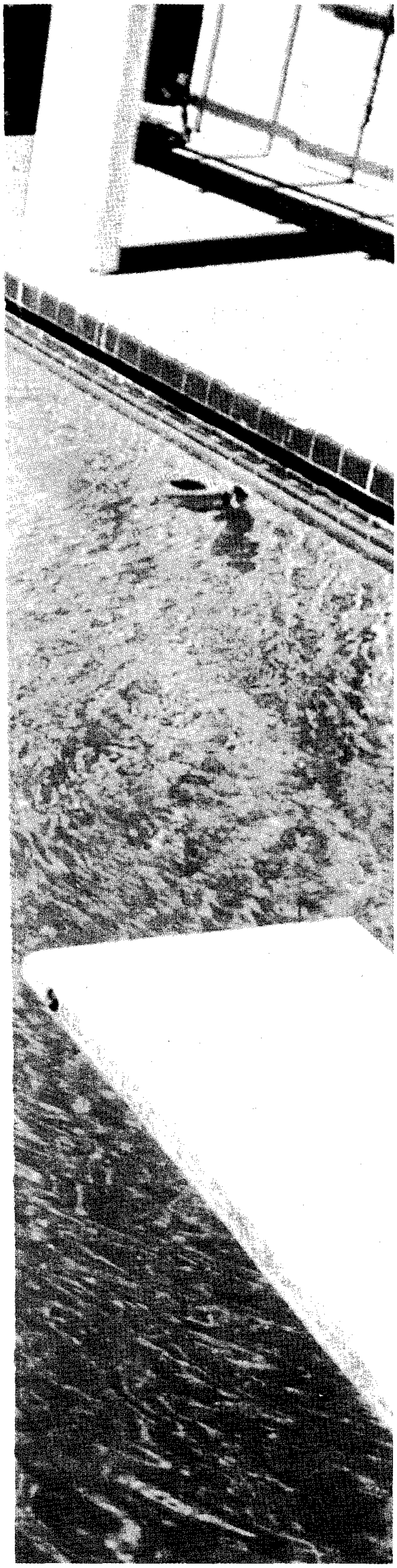
As the end of this particular day arrived, Geffen bounded out of his chair.

"So, we'll talk," he said, making a slight, suggestively inviting curling gesture with his hand, which meant "Call me."

II—KNOW HOW TO GET PAID

ENTERTAINMENT moguls usually come from the film business, sometimes from TV, almost never from the record industry: never before Geffen has a man emerged from the scrum of cigar-chomping fatties with shoe polish on





their heads to become one of the élite of the American mogulocracy. The skills required of the pop-music man tend to be local, fungible, and untransferrable. You may be temporarily blessed with a "gut" for what will sell, then you get older, the fashion changes, and the gut betrays you. Only Geffen has combined an exquisite sensitivity to pop-cultural fads with the cast-iron stomach of a businessman. Danny Goldberg, the head of the Mercury Records Group, told me, "There have been great A. & R. men in the record business, and great businessmen, and some great investment-banker types, but there has never been anyone except David who could do it all. He is the only person like that which the record business has ever produced."

Geffen's mother, who ran a corset-and-brassiere-making business out of the family's home, in Borough Park, Brooklyn (where young David slept on a couch in the living room), was his hero and role model. Geffen's father, on the other hand, was a scholar, who could not support the family and disappointed David. "After I realized my father didn't take care of the family, he sank somewhat in my eyes," Geffen told me. Some believe this to be the original wound that has driven Geffen in a series of complicated relationships with powerful men throughout his career, from Ahmet Ertegun to Steve Ross and on to Lew Wasserman.

A poor student, Geffen dropped out of both Brooklyn College and the University of Texas. But when he was twenty he said that he had graduated from U.C.L.A., in order to get a job in the mailroom of the William Morris Agency. Upon getting the job, Geffen heard that the agency checked résumés—some other guy who lied had been fired recently—so Geffen came into the office at 6 A.M. every day for six months until he saw an envelope from U.C.L.A. He opened it, altered the letter, and then put it back in the mail. The fact that Geffen has tinkered with the details of this story over the years—in one version he takes the letter to a printer and has the letterhead copied—adds a nice layer of varnish to this postmodern Sammy Glickian fable of self-invention.

Once inside William Morris, Geffen had perhaps the only epiphany of his life. "I'm delivering the mail to people's offices and I hear them on the phone, and I think, I can do *that*. Talk on the phone. This I can do."

In the late fifties and the early sixties, record companies had much more control over the way pop music sounded than they have today. The label generally chose the music, the producer, the arranger, and the band. The "artist"—the person who wrote and/or sang the song—had relatively little to do with the process. As the rock revolution swept aside these institutional controls, the singer-songwriters replaced the producers and arrangers as power centers in the industry. The artists' advocates, who were the agents and managers, got more powerful, while the labels' advocates, the lawyers, declined in influence. It was during this unsettled period that David Geffen first came to power as an agent and manager.

Geffen's sympathy with the pre-rock world of Broadway divas drew him to intense, difficult women like Laura Nyro and Joni Mitchell. Mitchell shared a house with Geffen, in accordance with a characteristic of his early career: total absorption in the client's life. (Later, when Geffen moved to L.A., he had a sexual relationship with Cher. "David wanted to marry me," she told me. "He proposed to me in Hawaii—he had a ring, and everything.") Nyro be-

SURFACE

The painter and photographer Edward Ruscha nearly single-handedly defined his generation's brand of California cool. In his books "Twentysix Gasoline Stations" (1963), "Every Building on the Sunset Strip" (1966), and "Thirtyfour Parking Lots in Los Angeles" (1967), the young Oklahoma transplant's visions of his adopted landscape veered from the bleak to the oddly idyllic. The solitary pumps and deserted patches of pavement seem to have sprung from the desert long before the advent of land-grabbing Angelenos. This photograph, from "Nine Swimming Pools and a Broken Glass" (recently published in a portfolio by Patrick Painter Editions), finds Ruscha encamped in the stylistic back yard of his friend David Hockney—a zone of alluring but unsettlingly vacant dreamscapes. New paintings by the artist go on view this spring at the Gagosian Gallery in Beverly Hills.

COURTESY LEHMANN MAUPIN, NY AND PAINTER EDITIONS

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came his client after a disastrous performance at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967, when her then manager dropped her, and Geffen proved a fierce champion of her quirky but genuine talent. David Crosby—who, along with the other members of what became Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, was also a client of Geffen's—told me, "David was always very ambitious for himself, but there was one interesting, unprotected place in him—he really loved Laura Nyro. That was a window into something in him that was not primarily about money." However, Geffen was not so besotted that he neglected to arrange for himself a half share of Tuna Fish Music—Nyro's publishing company—and that deal netted him more than two million dollars in 1971, the first big score of his career.

Geffen differed from other agent-managers in that he never lived the rock life. Unlike Albert Grossman, who was Bob Dylan's manager, Geffen did not become a hippie; he almost never used drugs. For anyone trying to understand Geffen's success in the rock business, it is worth keeping in mind that at crucial moments in the careers of rock stars, when millions of dollars in royalties hung in the balance, Geffen was the only person in the room who wasn't high.

Jackson Browne was Geffen's first discovery. Geffen had thrown Browne's demo tape away, but his secretary saw the boy's picture in the trash, thought he was cute, listened to the tape, and then made Geffen listen to it. Geffen invited Browne to his office. To Browne, Geffen was like a new being: a businessman who really liked music. "He seemed to be one of us, in a way," Browne told me. "That was the sort of word about him. He was like one of us, but he was sort of superior, because he was a very savvy businessman. Guys who had record companies would say, 'Shit, he's just so damn fast. He can make the computations so fast.' David takes a very direct route to the bottom line."

For Browne, it was a relief to find a record guy who did not want to squeeze him into a marketing concept. "To have someone who saw your songs were unique, and got what they were and said, 'Yeah, keep doing *that*'—that was great."

Browne told Geffen about a young musician living in the apartment upstairs from him. He turned out to be Glenn Frey, who became one of the Eagles.

IN 1971, Geffen established a record company called Asylum. "I had no desire to start a record company," he told me. "But I was challenged by Ahmet Ertegun when nobody wanted Jackson Browne. I said to him, 'You could make millions with this kid,' and he said, 'I already have millions.' It was like, 'Oh, thank you very much, I already *have* money.' "

Geffen rented a faux château on Sunset Boulevard, and that is where Geffen Records is now. Jay Ferguson, the lead singer of Jo Jo Gunne, Geffen's second Asylum signing, told me, "The name reflected exactly what David wanted it to be—an asylum for the artists." Asylum became the house of the L.A. sound in the early and mid-seventies. Jackson Browne, Jo Jo Gunne, Linda Ronstadt, Joni Mitchell of the "Court and Spark" period, and the Eagles. Chris Blackwell, the founder of Island Records, says, "That whole California folk-rock scene, or whatever is the right term for it—I think David really understood that this was just something that was going to be huge."

The rock critic Robert Christgau, reviewing the Eagles' first album, in 1972, wrote that the Eagles were "brilliant but false." In a sense, this was true. The "peaceful, easy feeling," which became the sound of California, was made by a guy from Detroit (Frey), a guy from Texas (Don Henley), and a guy from Brooklyn (Geffen). The rock that the Eagles played did not draw on the historical reality of black music, or the political legitimacy of folk, or the social energy of the class struggle. Their music worked as style alone.

Fred Goodman, in his recent book about the rock-and-roll business, "Mansion on the Hill," writes, "If the acquisition of wealth and influence is rock's ultimate meaning, then the most meaningful figure it has produced is the billionaire mogul, David Geffen." It is clear from the context that Goodman means this sardonically. Like many of the rock writers who came of age in the sixties, Goodman believes that businessmen corrupted rock, and in his book he paints Geffen as a principal devil in this larger cultural transaction. Goodman quotes Paul Rothchild, a producer whom Geffen outfoxed in a deal involving Crosby, Stills, and Nash: "When David Geffen enters the California waters as a manager, sharks have entered the lagoon. And the entire vibe changes. It used to be 'Let's make music, money is a by-product.' Then it becomes 'Let's make money, music is a by-product.' "

But Geffen was not always so sophisticated about money. He made a terrible deal when he sold Asylum to Steve Ross for seven million dollars in 1972, and became the head of a new Warner-owned label, Elektra-Asylum-Nonesuch, for three years. Seven million was the highest number Geffen could think of. Every Eagles record sold more than that. And Goodman downplays the artists' own greed: Geffen may have led them to this tree of knowledge, but they did freely eat from it. Jimmy Iovine says, "Most people don't know how to get paid. That's an art. Geffen taught people that." Jackson Browne says, "Money does corrupt. God, as soon as you have a lot of money, you've got to figure out how to stay in touch with what you write and why you write. And if you always had the idea that money was going to make a difference in your life, now you have to contend with the idea that it doesn't. But David Geffen didn't do that. I mean, come on. Why not say the Beatles did it?"

Today, Geffen is bored by discussions about meaning and rock. He told me, "Most of the artists were trying to make a living, trying to get laid, trying to figure out who they were. They weren't trying to change the world. That's what other people put on them. I knew all those people. I knew them all, intimately and well. Bob Dylan. I would say that Bob Dylan is as interested in money as any person I've known in my life. That's just the truth."

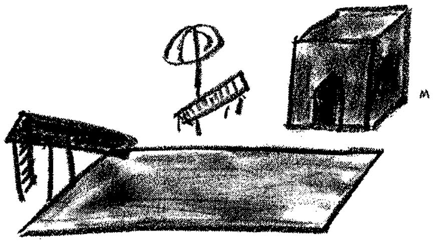
III—HOLLYWOOD GODFATHER

GEFFEN did not go to Washington for the "Amistad" première. He was, however, dragooned into going to the L.A. opening of the movie, on a Wednesday night in early December. It was dark when I walked into his office in Beverly Hills. Geffen had put on a blazer and leather shoes, but not a tie. He wore jeans and some kind of soft cotton shirt. His jaw was somewhat pushed out, which is the way it gets when he is unhappy. The night before, Rose Tarlow, much against his will, had dragged him to a party at a Richard Meier-designed house in Malibu, because Richard Meier was her boyfriend and it was important that David come. Now Geffen had to endure this opening, when all he wanted to do was "go home, watch a movie, and go to bed."

The news that "Amistad" might have been plagiarized from a book by Barbara Chase-Riboud, a black writer, seemed to be on TV every half hour that day. This added to a swarm of rumors going around town that some important DreamWorks backers were getting nervous.

Founded at what may have been the peak of the content-is-king mania, in 1994, DreamWorks had received a tremendous amount of publicity, thanks to the aura of its three stars, and the company had attracted more money by far from outside investors than any other startup in history. Obscured in the excitement was the difficulty of launching a studio in the current marketplace. The costs of making movies are so great, and the risks so high, that it is almost impossible to turn a startup studio into a viable business. Most record and theatrical businesses rely on their backlists to make money—or, at least, to get them through the precarious period between hits. But DreamWorks would be starting from scratch.

In order to pay for the vicissitudes of hit-making, the DreamWorks business plan relied heavily on the income that would be generated by Katzenberg's animated-film division, where the merchandising and rental markets are extremely lucrative. In 1994, with animated films still pretty much a Disney franchise, this scenario seemed more viable than it does today. Now Fox is in the animated-film business, with "Anastasia," and other studios are getting into it; the market is becoming crowded. A lot is riding on DreamWorks' first animated feature, "The Prince of Egypt," which is scheduled to be released in November. "Ants," the company's first computer-animated film, is due in the spring of 1999. People who have seen parts of both films say they are brilliant.



DreamWorks has made only three pictures so far (Fox 2000, started at the same time, has made five), and the three, "The Peacemaker," "Amistad," and "MouseHunt," have been less than spectacularly successful. Some of the problems are the result of bad luck. Shortly after settling on a site for a thousand-acre studio, in Playa Vista, the partners found themselves embroiled in a fight with supporters of the Ballona Wetlands. And some of the criticism of DreamWorks has been motivated by the usual desire to see the great fall. When the company was founded, Tom Hanks said, "I guarantee that when the first film premières everyone will say, 'This is it? This is what these three geniuses have come up with?' " He was right. "The Peacemaker," a well-made but run-of-the-mill action picture, was mostly savaged.

Geffen, in conversation with me, dismissed all talk of troubles at DreamWorks as "ridiculously premature." He said, "I keep reading articles about DreamWorks that say, 'Where's the beef?' We have put together an infrastructure that's superb. We're beginning to siphon products into that infrastructure. It's very expensive and very time-consuming and you don't get a lot of glory when you're putting together an infrastructure, but if you don't have it you can't be in business." Nevertheless, perhaps because Geffen knew the value of perception as well as anyone, the rumors about DreamWorks' being in trouble with its investors made him very cranky. When I brought that point up, he said, "We know what we're doing, no matter what anyone else writes about it. I have no doubt—none, zero—that we will be very successful. Because we would all rather die than fail."

"Really? "

"I can't imagine failing. I cannot imagine that. There is no scenario in my head that I can conjure up. I know that I will succeed, because I am committing all the energy, intelligence, passion, and belief that I can muster up to make me do so. And that's true of my partners. That's why we were attracted to each other and why we went into business together." He added, "My life can't be a failure, right? My life is a success: I'm a happy guy." As on other occasions when he made that statement to me, I had a sense that it was a conclusion reached by argument.

At six-twenty, Geffen's driver arrived to take him to the theatre.

"What am I going to say to these people?" Geffen asked, in a Woody Allen whine.

"I don't know, boss," the driver said.

Geffen began mimicking the grilling he was expecting to get from the paparazzi: " 'David! David! Mr. Geffen! Why did you cast George Clooney in "The Peacemaker"? What do you think about the lawsuit?' " And he said, "It's awful. Awful. I have absolutely no desire to go to these things." He gave me his dead-on look. "I lead a very quiet life."

We got into the car, a black Mercedes sedan with a gray leather interior, and drove to the door of the Academy, at Wilshire and Almont. We were exactly on time, as Geffen likes to be. Pat Kingsley, Matthew McConaughey's publicist—a tall woman with a pageboy—was striding back and forth in front of the rope shutting out the paparazzi; she looked like an exotic wading bird. On seeing Geffen, she approached, bent her head (Geffen is five feet seven), and whispered something in his ear. He moved slowly down the row of the entertainment press. He seemed to be taking another Post-it moment, the thing he does to "quiet his mind." His face became very relaxed, and his perspective shifted to the middle distance. "Mr. Geffen! David!" Every single reporter asked about the lawsuit against "Amistad." It was an amazing display of herd thinking. "I don't know anything about the lawsuit," Geffen said serenely. (Last week, Chase-Riboud withdrew her suit.)

After this ordeal, Geffen stood inside the door of the Academy. Jeffrey Katzenberg appeared and stood near him. Katzenberg said "Good, good" a lot when people stopped to chat with him. It was a way of responding to two questions to which the answer was "Good" and moving on.

Stars and other moguls paid homage to Geffen. Some clasped Geffen's hand, some shook both his hands at once, some bowed, and a lucky few gave him a full bear hug—the Hollywood embrace. A simple handshake did not seem to be enough to convey the complex emotions involved in being in a relationship with Geffen—emotions encompassing both genuine gratitude for his friendship and an apprehension that this friendship may involve dues you haven't yet been asked to pay.

The idea that Geffen crushes people who displease is felt so broadly and deeply in the community he presides over that it is almost an article of faith, irrespective of the facts. He is notorious for pursuing vendettas against enemies, some of whom used to be his closest friends. Sandy Gallin, a well-known Hollywood manager who used to be part of Geffen's inner circle, was hurled from it last year for soap-operatic reasons. Even Barry Diller, one of Geffen's oldest friends (they met in the William Morris mailroom in 1964), once fell out with him so badly that they did not speak to each other for a year.

"They say that Hollywood is a high school with money," one media executive told me, "and David is the principal of that high school." He has brought to school some unsettled scores from the Brooklyn playground. Having no family leaves Geffen lots of energy to pursue his machinations and his grievances. "You know, the guy has a lot of time," one record-industry person told me. "And if you make him unhappy you'll hear from him." Geffen's long-running feud with Michael Ovitz almost came to blows a few years ago, when Ovitz went to his office and threatened to punch Geffen out for disparaging his family. (These days, Geffen's style is not so much to trash Ovitz as to say, "I hate to kick a man when he's down.") Michael Eisner, once a "close close friend," fell out with Geffen over Eisner's treatment of Katzenberg. "Michael is a liar," Geffen told Robert Sam Anson, in the magazine *Los Angeles* in 1995. "And anyone who has dealt with him—genuinely dealt with him—knows he's a liar." Now, according to Geffen, they're friendly again.

Geffen likes to portray himself as an honest man in a dishonest world. "In Hollywood people lie to each other and cheat each other and then go and play tennis," he told me. "But I don't want to be a tennis player. I don't want to *be* that. I'm not going to go play tennis with people who lie to me or fuck me over in some way—I'm not *interested* in that. I'm willing to trust people until I'm taught not to trust them. I come from a place of trust and openness." In a world built on fake reality, a man who purports to trade only in the truth is feared as much as he is respected. But some say that Geffen wouldn't need to talk about honesty so much if he were more honest in his own dealings with people.

In the lobby of the Academy, Sid Sheinberg, the former president of MCA, approached Geffen and gave him the Hollywood embrace. The actor Harry Hamlin stopped to talk about the beach where they both live; Hamlin said that there was a break in front of his house where he and his seventeen-year-old son surf; Geffen's eyebrows were lively with interest. ("Do you surf?" I asked Geffen after Hamlin moved on. "Do I surf? My God, no.") A guy thanked David for his generosity to an AIDS charity and made almost a full bow. A writer said, "You know that Phil Spector thing you helped me with? Well, he wrote me a letter and he said, 'You can have the rights—only, don't think that I am representative of the music business.' "

Finally, Steven Spielberg arrived, and there was a photo op for the three partners. No glamour, no aura came off them: they were just three hardworking middle-aged guys, all with a similarly boyish quality. After the official pictures were snapped, a DreamWorks employee directed the three to a van outside, to take them to a second opening, where they would do everything again. The man said, "Make sure you don't all walk outside together"—it would not do to allow the common paparazzi to capture the image of the partners standing together.

"First, they don't let us ride on the same plane," Spielberg said. "Now they don't let us leave together."

IV—THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIP INTO COOL

A LESS comfortable Geffen put in an appearance in these pages in 1978, in George Trow's Profile of Ahmet Ertegun, published when Geffen was in retirement. Geffen was found to have bladder cancer in 1976, and at the same time he was fired from his job of running Warner pictures. Bound by a noncompete contract, he "retired" to New York, frequented Studio 54, and lectured at Yale. After a brilliant trajectory across the music industry, his influence seemed to wane. "There was a brief vogue for David Geffen," Trow wrote. Geffen was bright and brash, but he didn't have any of the connoisseurship, the cultivation, or the style that Ahmet Ertegun had. Ertegun was hip. He was an adept. He had the specialized knowledge that you could get only by going out night after night to Harlem to smoke some tea with bebop musicians, or by going down to New Orleans to hear the swamp music. Geffen, whose Jewish Afro was always slightly askew, was emphatically not hip.

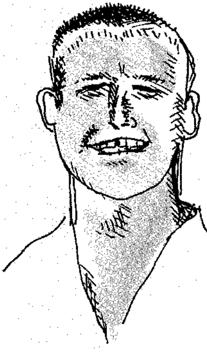
The fact that things seem to have turned out the other way—one could argue that there was a briefer vogue for Ertegun than there was for Geffen—offers an interesting lesson in the history of cultural capitalism. Intimate knowledge of black-roots music, such as Ertegun possessed, made it hard for him to grasp the fundamental change in the meaning of rock and roll, in the seventies, from something that was primarily about music and history to something that was primarily about image and style.

As Ertegun presided over the transformation of black culture into hip white culture, so Geffen presided over the transformation of hip culture into the new consumerist culture of cool. Cool required no specialized knowledge. Cool could be bought (though, one hoped, not for cheap). Cool was hip plus market demographics. Instead of a tastemaker like Ertegun, companies now had a "coolhunter," a kind of market researcher who went looking for the adolescent styles in the streets and then passed them along to the suits. Geffen, easily bored, petulant, insecure, unburdened by history, and blessed with the plastic enthusiasms of the fifteen-year-old impulse buyer, was attuned to this new market-oriented spirit in a way that the erudite Ertegun could never be.

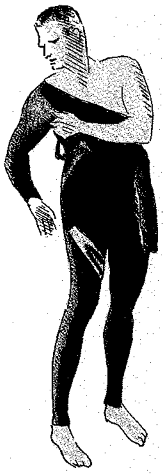
IN 1980, Geffen came out of retirement by founding Geffen Records. (His bladder ailment turned out to have been misdiagnosed; he never had cancer at all.) After twenty consecutive un-

SKETCHBOOK BY MICHAEL ROBERTS

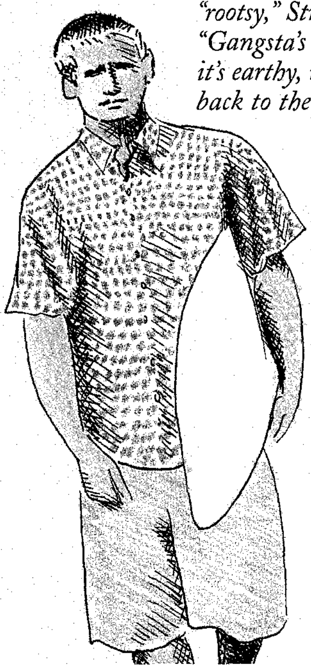
THE LOOK FROM HUNTINGTON BEACH



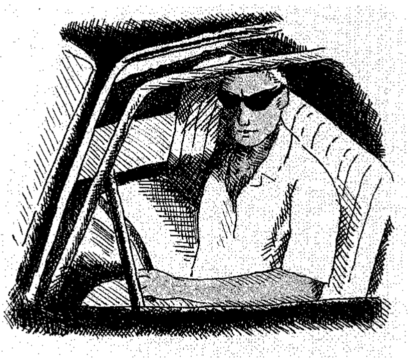
Soul surfer Strider Rasberry Wasilewski worked as a child model for the photographer Herb Ritts. "I cut my nose in half when I was fourteen. That sort of ended my modelling career."



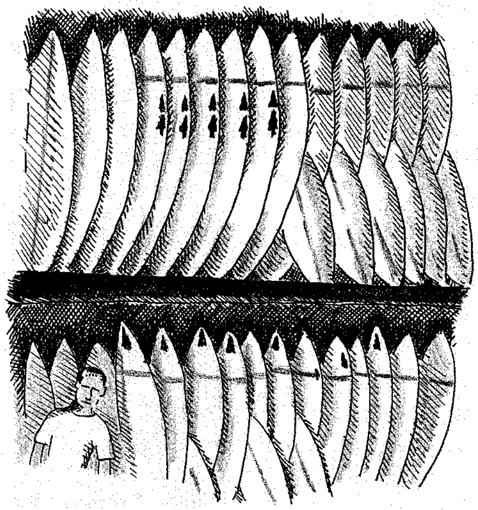
The latest wetsuits have no zippers, so Strider enters his Quiksilver suit through the neck. Minimal logos are also considered cool, although " 'cool' is such a surfer word that we stay away from it," Strider says.



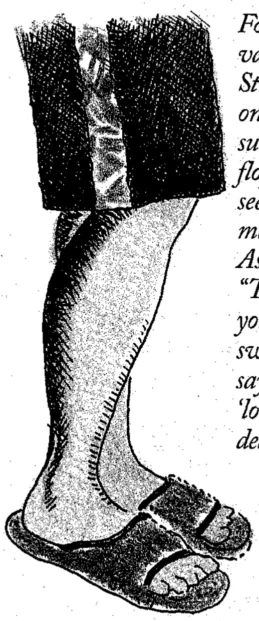
Soul surfers are "rootsy," Strider says. "Gangsta's out. Now it's earthy, natural, back to the sixties."



Strider drives a '64 Dodge Dart, and his hair is styled in a retro buzz cut: "It's a timeless, classic style. It's never going anywhere."



In the board room of the Huntington Surf and Sport shop, the newest surfboards, according to Strider, have "gone from that colorful thing to clear foam."



For novelty value, Strider tries on a pair of surfer flip-flops that seem to be made from Astroturf. "They make your feet sweat," he says. "The 'look-at-me' deal is over."

profitable quarters, Geffen caught a vibe from the big-hair hard-rock bands of the mid-eighties—Whitesnake, the second incarnation of Aerosmith, and, above all, Guns n' Roses—and rode it to astonishing success. His company also produced successful movies—"After Hours," "Lost in America," "Beetlejuice," "Interview with the Vampire" (Geffen has always been drawn to stories of dysfunctional families)—and he himself invested in two enormously successful Broadway musicals, "Dreamgirls" and "Cats." Perhaps his most self-revealing project, though, was "Risky Business," which introduced Tom Cruise to the world. Geffen came up with the famous poster image of Cruise in sunglasses, dressed in the Geffen T-shirt-and-jeans style, and he insisted on changing the screenwriters' ending for the movie, in which Tom Cruise was punished for his misdeeds by not getting into Princeton. In the version that the world now knows, Cruise gets the good life *and* Princeton.

To find talent for his company, Geffen assembled a legendary A. & R. department. Gary Gersh brought Nirvana to the label, which extended Geffen into yet another musical generation; Tom Zutaut signed Guns n' Roses; and John Kolodner brought Whitesnake and Aerosmith. Geffen himself no longer cared much about the artists on the label. "In the seventies, I wasn't a businessman," Geffen told me. "I was simply a fan. We were all just hanging out, and—oh, my God—I just heard this guy Tom Waits, and isn't he terrific, and I'm going to make a record with him. But in the eighties I was a businessman."

Jackson Browne says, "One time, I came to see David and I heard this heavy-metal music coming through the floor and I said 'What's that?' and David said 'Oh, that's my heavy-metal band. There's a lot of money being made on heavy metal, and I want some.' And I said, '*O.K.* Help yourself, you know.' Or he would name somebody on his label and say, 'They tell me he's really good; I've never heard him.' He almost flaunted his ignorance—not knowing exactly who the artists were but knowing that his company was a really well-oiled machine."

At the end of the eighties, in the round of corporate consolidation that laid the foundation for the big media of our time, Geffen cashed in and became the richest man in Hollywood.

"We saw David not long after the MCA deal," the producer David Brown, who has known Geffen for years, told me. "I was with my wife"—Helen Gurley Brown. "Helen asked David what it was like, being so successful, and David said, 'It's the oddest feeling.' He couldn't quite understand it. It was as though he had lost something when he gained so much."

The MCA deal ended the second act of Geffen's life. He bought, for forty-seven and a half million dollars, a famous house—the Warner estate, which was built by Jack Warner at the top of Beverly Hills in the thirties. For eight years now, he has been closely involved in the taking apart and rearranging of virtually everything in and around the house, including the tennis court and the swimming pool. (He may be the only mogul who has ever made his Xanadu smaller.) He turned a billion dollars into two billion. Though he preferred to remain above the fray, he didn't seem to have lost his gut for pop culture. It was Geffen who persuaded Calvin Klein to use Marky Mark for his underwear ads. And Geffen immediately grasped the appeal of Beavis and Butt-head. "We aired Beavis and Butt-head on a Friday night late in 1992, '93," says Tom Freston. "David calls me at home the next morning, ten o'clock Saturday morning New York time, so it's 7 A.M. in L.A. He had seen it on MTV the night before. It's not as if someone said, David, you got to watch this. He had just seen it. And he called me and said, 'Tom, this is going to be a huge hit, unbelievable. I want to make a movie and a record with you.' "

Geffen still approaches the movie-making part of his job at DreamWorks gut first. "I'm just here as a member of the audience," he said recently to David Brown and his partner Richard Zanuck, when they screened the rough cut of their new DreamWorks movie, "Deep Impact." Geffen spoke laconically when the screening ended, and what he did say mostly concerned how to sharpen the film's emotional appeal. " 'Go for the gut, go for the emotions,' he kept saying," Brown recalled.

These days, most of Geffen's own passion and money are spent on collecting art. In the past decade, by using what several dealers I spoke to said was a remarkable eye for an artist's best work, Geffen has assembled one of the world's greatest collections of postwar American art in private hands, with special emphasis on works by Pollock, Johns, de Kooning, Twombly, Newman, and Gorky. Only when we were talking about his collection did I glimpse the kind of irrepressible awe and enthusiasm that little David Geffen brought to rock music in the old days.

V—HOLLYWOOD RAJAH

SHORTLY after the new year, Geffen at last moved into his new house. This marked a significant passage for him. Geffen's Malibu beach house, comfortable though it is, has no real style except as another neutral, white environment for Geffen to operate within. The Warner house, on the other hand, seemed to be Geffen's attempt to commit to something, a departure from the "Who really gives a shit?" attitude that is Geffen's usual mode. Renovating the house seemed to be a symbolic working out of the larger project of his life. "David knows more about making two billion dollars than he does about being happy," the manager and producer Jon Landau told me. "And I think he wants to know about being happy now. He's a work in progress. He is able to experience happiness, but it's been a roller coaster for him."

"Everyone who knows him thought that it was such a very unlikely house for David to buy," Fran Lebowitz told me. Another friend, the designer Diane Von Furstenberg, said, "The house is a mystery. It may be a mystery to David. It will reveal itself. Either he will be happy and comfortable there or he will sell it." Perhaps a clue lay in "Hollywood Rajah," by Bosley Crowther, which Geffen bought in the Times Square subway station when he was eleven years old. Crowther tells the story of Louis B. Mayer, a poor Jewish boy who made his way to Hollywood and became a great mogul, in part because he based decisions on his heart and gut, not on his intellect. Geffen has said that "Hollywood Rajah" was the only book he ever read that deeply influenced his life.

A long negotiation preceded Geffen's agreeing to show me the house, where he lives alone. At one point, trying to put me off, he said, "Well, you come out to L.A. for other things, right?" and I said, "No, David, I'm here for you," and Geffen clasped his hands together and warbled, "You're here for me! I love that!" Finally, on the morning after the "Amistad" opening, I received a call saying that Geffen would pick me up at my hotel at noon. Coming down the steps, I saw his face leaning against the car window as he was talking on the phone. The eyebrows were not lively, and boredom was completely in the ascendant on his face.

"I want you to know I really didn't want to do this," Geffen said as I got in, his voice gravelly with displeasure. This established, his mood seemed to brighten a little. The driver started up the winding streets that led to the top of Beverly Hills, where the Warner house occupies ten rolling acres.

"Steven was in *tears* this morning," Geffen said. "You know what *Time* called him? 'Steven Stealberg.' It's awful. Disgusting. The film is forever tainted by this lawsuit." Peeking out of a leather document holder on the back of the front seat was the day's schedule, starting with his shrink at 11 A.M.

After passing through a big copper gate, the driveway wound among overhanging sycamores. Jack Warner had had a four-hole pitch-and-putt golf course here. Geffen had eliminated it and regraded the area extensively, enhancing the great long vistas of the rolling hills. He planted full-grown sycamores; they were brought through Beverly Hills one at a time at night, after streets were closed off for that purpose.

The house is white, in the Hollywood Georgian style, with columns in front. Geffen flung open the front door for me and made a submissive, "you first" gesture. Inside was a circular entryway with a parquetry floor and a curving staircase. To the right was a long, narrow Jackson Pollock and to the left was a de Kooning; beyond them were a Gorky and a Rauschenberg. The dining room, just to the left, was also the library. There was pine panelling, of a width that you can't get anymore; Geffen bought a nineteenth-century school in North Carolina just for the pine. Rococo moldings throughout the house had been cleared away, except in the living room, which also contains other touches of its original aspect. Downstairs was a great Art Deco screening room. Geffen showed me where the screen came up through the floor. There was a Deco bar, and around the corner was a billiard room. A spectacular Jasper Johns target painting on one wall made the hair on the back of my neck stand up.

When I asked Rose Tarlow, later, to characterize Geffen's sense of style, she said, "David knows what he wants. Or, rather, he knows what he doesn't want. David has a very definite sense of right and wrong. But he couldn't tell you how to do something—what style, what period to use. He just knows. He can walk into the room and see one little piece down in the corner, just one spot, and say, 'That's not right.' It's simply amazing. Almost unbelievable."

Upstairs, we went into the master bedroom, where the only painting was a Jasper Johns flag. Down the hall was what had been the children's wing, which Geffen has turned into a guest bedroom and a gym full of gleaming Cybex machines. The gym was the only room in the house where I could easily imagine him. He seemed a bit sheepish in the other rooms; it was as if we were kids sneaking into the grownups' house.

Finally, Geffen led me into the one room from the original house which has been preserved intact: Jack Warner's cracked-leather office and dressing room. Masculine hairbrushes and tonics were lying out on the table as though Warner had left them there earlier in the day. Geffen said that the windows in the bathroom had been moved, and that some of the cracked leather had needed to be redone, but it was impossible to find anyone who knew how to do the work. "So we— See." He showed me his solution: painted panels that looked exactly like the original leather.

If the purpose of his existence was the Hollywood Rajahfication of little David Geffen, the process was now complete. Geffen could get no closer to the myth that had shaped his life than this room. But the place did not seem to have any appreciably different effect on Geffen than his other environments. Part of the trick in being David Geffen, this rajah of the relationship economy, seemed to mean remaining untouched by anything that might make the exquisite instincts less pure. Even Jack Warner's cracked-leather sanctum was just another room for talking on the phone. ♦

MAPS TO THE CRIME SCENES OF THE STARS $5 ea.
CHENEY

SHOWCASE

BRAIN TRUST

A NOBEL PRIZE, unlike an Academy Award, is not a recognition of immediate achievement: the academic community takes years to acknowledge genius. In the sciences, every finding must be replicated and every judgment confirmed, with the result that even the most brilliant young researcher is rarely honored before middle age. That dozens of Nobels have been won by Californians over the years, then, is an impressive fact—with an important qualification. It tells us that in the fifties, sixties, and seventies science was practiced as well in the State of California as anywhere else in the world. It tells us less about the way science is practiced in California today.

Last month, twenty-two of the state's Nobelists gathered for a group portrait on a beach north of San Francisco. Look at their faces. Here are men with beards, and men with bow ties, and men with glasses, and men with white hair or black hair. But they are all men. In fact, with the exception of the Stanford physicist Steven Chu, they are all Caucasian men. Science in the nineteen-fifties and sixties, it should be remembered, was an exclusive club. The affiliations of California's Nobelists are also telling. Of the total, a huge number—

Along with winners in the hard sciences, the group above includes Nobel Laureates in literature (Czeslaw Milosz) and economics (Kenneth Arrow, Harry Markowitz, and William Sharpe), and a founder (Herbert Abrams) of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, which won the Peace Prize. Seated, with assorted descendants and dogs: Edward Lewis, George Olah,

thirty-two—taught in the state's public-university system. U.C. San Diego won three Nobels in the nineteen-sixties and four more in the nineteen-seventies; U.C. San Francisco won two in 1989 and another last year; U.C. Irvine won two in 1995. As for Berkeley, the jewel of the system, a natural-sciences major there in the fifties could, for a modest tuition, be taught by close to a dozen past and future Nobel laureates. California in its heyday managed to make genius public property. By contrast, Massachusetts, the other great American academic enclave, has always kept genius locked away behind ivied walls. Is it any wonder that the Massachusetts Miracle faded, while California's state system was able to turn out the engineers and scientists necessary to fuel its high-tech industries?

The hard question for California is whether—in the wake of recent budget cuts—these achievements will continue. World-class science demands money and attention, and the resources that once enriched the U.C. system today seem to be directed more often to private institutions like Stanford and CalTech. We know that if, thirty years from now, California's Nobel laureates once again assemble on the beach, not all of them will be men and not all of them will be white. It is less clear to what extent that assembled genius will still belong to the people of California.

—MALCOLM GLADWELL

Herbert Abrams, J. Michael Bishop, Harry Markowitz, Paul Berg, Arthur Kornberg, Donald Glaser, and Burton Richter. Standing: William Sharpe, David Baltimore, Czeslaw Milosz, Steven Chu, Charles Townes, Douglas Osheroff, Glenn Seaborg, Kary Mullis, Martin Perl, Rudolph Marcus, Arthur Schawlow, Henry Taube, and Kenneth Arrow. Photograph by Max Vadukul.

ANNALS OF ENTERPRISE

THE COMEBACK

A few years ago, California's economy was a study in decline. Now it's the model of the future. How did the state recover?

BY JOHN CASSIDY

WHEN Henry Segerstrom looks out a window of his family's ranch in Costa Mesa, forty miles south of Los Angeles, he sees not the lima-bean farm he worked on as a boy in the nineteen-thirties but the San Diego Freeway, a ten-lane tapestry of concrete that extends from the San Fernando Valley to Irvine. A century ago, Segerstrom's grandfather, an immigrant from Sweden, leased twenty acres of Southern California scrubland, which he gradually built into a two-thousand-acre farm. His family cultivated the land until the forties, when they began to develop it. In 1967, the Segerstroms opened the area's first enclosed shopping mall, South Coast Plaza, and it has become one of the most popular attractions in Orange County. Segerstrom, who is seventy-four, is an extremely wealthy man. On a bright morning recently, he raised himself to his six-foot-one-inch height, grabbed a long wooden stick, and pointed at a map that showed how the San Diego and Santa Ana Freeways converge a few miles to the south. "These two roads have been the backbone of growth in this community," he declared.

Growth, a key word in the Californian lexicon, seemed to be in danger of disappearing during the early nineties, when the state was hit by a lengthy recession. Now growth is back, and so is the optimistic outlook that is embodied in developers like Segerstrom. "I am bullish on Orange County. I am bullish on California," he said, slowly and firmly. "California is probably the most creative place in the world today." It is easy to mock such statements as self-serving, but they reflect an attitude that has built the world's seventh-largest economy, in a state that was principally agrarian when Segerstrom was a child. Other parts of the country have also prospered in the past few years, but California has created jobs at a greater rate than the national average, and there are now about eight hundred thousand more people working in the state than worked there before the recession started. Some parts of the state, particularly the richer parts, are enjoying an old-fashioned boom.

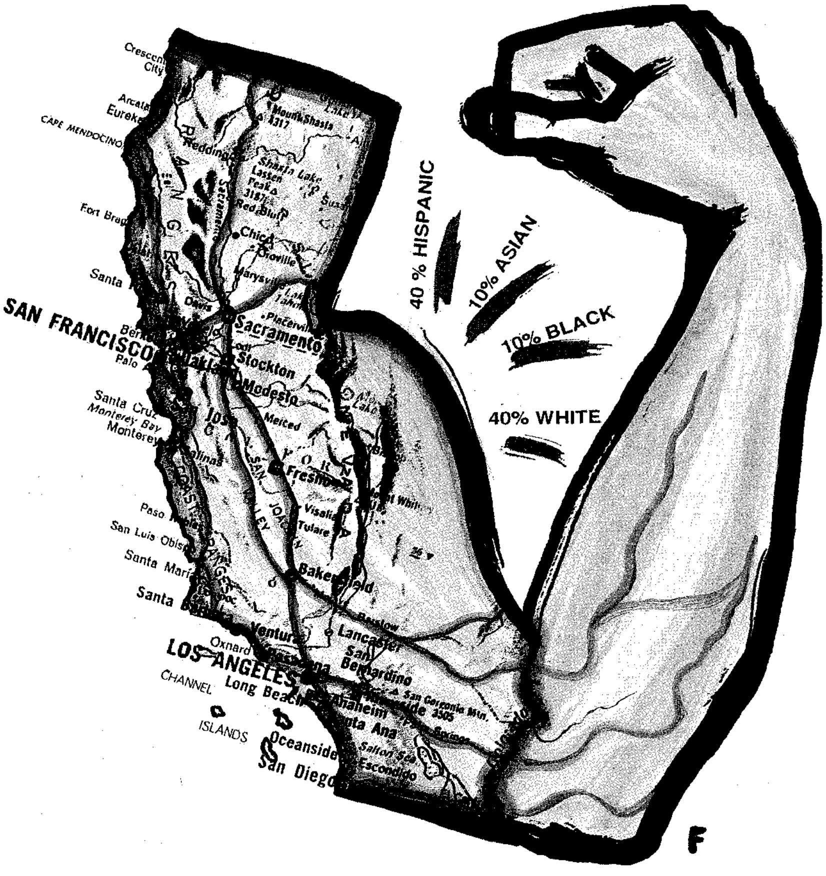
Orange County is one such area. During the early nineties, it was racked by layoffs and falling real-estate prices as the defense contractors that had helped to finance the region's economic development were themselves poleaxed by Pentagon cutbacks. In 1994, the county suffered the ignominy of filing for bankruptcy after its treasurer, Robert Citron, made a series of disastrous investments. Three and a half years later, the near-bankruptcy has been largely forgotten. Property prices are up sharply, and the county's unemployment rate has fallen to two and a half per cent—one of the lowest rates in the nation.

Certainly recession and the financial humiliation haven't had much lasting impact on South Coast Plaza. A decade ago, Segerstrom decided to take his shopping center upmarket and invited Tiffany & Co., Versace, Barneys, Chanel, Hermès, and Tourneau, among other retailers, to open up alongside Macy's and Robinsons-May. "We wanted to recognize the growing affluence of Southern California, which we felt was not being effectively served by Beverly Hills," Segerstrom explained, using his stick to draw an imaginary horizontal line on the map from Los Angeles International Airport through Pasadena and into the San Gabriel Mountains. "Anybody above that line we thought would stick with Beverly Hills. Anybody south of it was ours." Most stores that accepted Segerstrom's invitation prospered, and development around South Coast Plaza now includes a Cesar Pelli-designed office building, a sculpture garden by Isamu Noguchi, and the Orange County Performing Arts Center. Segerstrom put up a bar chart and showed me how South Coast Plaza's annual sales had grown from a hundred and fifty million dollars in 1977 to nine hundred and fifty million dollars last year. The chart levelled off in the early nineties—"a blip," Segerstrom called it—but rose again after 1994. "We are approaching the magical point of a billion dollars a year in sales," he said.

THE equation linking California and economic growth has been called into question before—notably when the Los Angeles land boom burst, at the end of the nineteen-twenties—but never more intensely than during the early years of this decade. As riots followed recession, and earthquake followed riots, the apocalyptic aspect of the California character—an aspect stressed by writers like Cain and West—eclipsed the sunny optimism that is the state's official ideology. Hundreds of thousands of residents voted with U-Haul vans and moved to Oregon, Nevada, and New Mexico. Even the California business community, a circle in which boosterism is a watchword, temporarily lost the script. "People here never thought anything like that could happen. They just couldn't believe it," I was told by Eli Broad, chairman of SunAmerica, a California-based financial company. In November of 1993, one of the state's most prominent economists—Larry Kimbell, who was then the head of the Business Forecasting Project at U.C.L.A.—said to a reporter, "If you want a job this century, leave California."

Since then, the California economy has created a million three hundred thousand new jobs. The rebound has transformed the mood of the state's business and political leaders. California still has serious problems—rising economic inequality, crumbling schools, a dysfunctional political system, a massive influx of unskilled immigrants from Latin

America and Asia—but at least it will be able to respond to them within the context of a growing economy. This is a far less ominous prospect than the one that the state appeared to be faced with a few years ago: managing the grievances of an increasingly heterogeneous and embittered populace in an environment where economic growth was a thing of the past.



California has made an unexpected jump from the military-industrial complex to the cultural-industrial complex.

To find out how this transformation came about, I travelled to Silicon Valley and met one of the few economists who never lost faith in California: Stephen Levy, the director of the privately funded Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy. Levy and his partner, Bob Arnold, spoke to me over lunch at an Italian restaurant on University Avenue, in Palo Alto. "We allowed the media to misreport the real nature of the state's economy, and that cost us unknown billions in outside investment," Levy told me. "It was really obvious, when you looked at the numbers closely, that the new economic base was in place to insure California's future."

Levy built his career on numbers. Every year, he produces a three-hundred-page report that contains figures on everything from the number of people working in the Los Angeles furniture industry (thirty-nine thousand eight hundred) to the amount of venture capital invested in California firms last year (almost three and a half billion dollars). Over the next seven years, he says, "California will outpace the nation in jobs, income, household, and population growth."

This prediction is based on the state's having enjoyed what Levy calls "a very nontraditional rebound." In most business cycles, the industries that lead the economy into recession eventually lead it to recovery, but that wasn't the case in California. Aerospace, construction, and retail sales—the three sectors where employment fell most sharply during the recession—subsequently stabilized, but didn't regain many jobs. (Raytheon, a defense company, recently announced fifty-two hundred more layoffs across California.) The recovery was led by high technology, tourism and entertainment, professional services, and foreign trade.

One in eight Americans lives in California, but, if the calculations Levy cites are correct, about one in five of the nation's high-technology jobs is located there. Some of these jobs are at well-established firms, such as Intel, Hewlett-Packard, and Sun Microsystems, but many are at smaller, fast-growing companies, such as PeopleSoft, Bay Networks, and Qualcomm. If, as many analysts suspect, the big industries of the future are biotechnology and Internet-related commerce, California appears well placed to exploit their growth. Orange County and San Diego County are already world leaders in medical-instrument manufacturing, while Los Angeles and the Bay Area have more multimedia firms than the rest of the country combined.

Silicon Valley itself is, to be sure, thriving. One morning recently, I drove from San Francisco to Santa Clara, a forty-mile journey that took two hours because of the traffic. When I arrived at the annual meeting of Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network, a public-private-sector partnership set up to improve the quality of life in the area, a speaker was talking about the generosity of computer-industry folk. ("Eighty-three per cent of Silicon Valley families give to charity, compared with sixty-nine per cent nationally," she assured the audience.) I picked up a copy of Joint Venture's "1998 Index of Silicon Valley," which told me that the new Klondike has a territory of fifteen hundred square miles (a bit less than Long Island), a population of two million three hundred thousand, and a payroll of a million two hundred thousand workers. Almost one in four Silicon Valley residents is foreign-born, one in three has a bachelor's degree or more, and the average household income in Santa Clara County, the heart of the Valley, is a hundred and one thousand dollars. The "Index" went on in this vein for thirty pages—about ten new firms are incorporated every day, an estimated fifty-three thousand new jobs were created in 1997, traffic delays have doubled in two years—and I felt exhausted just reading it. Becky Morgan, a former state senator, who is the president of Joint Venture, evidently felt the same way. "We can't grow at this rate forever," she told me after the meeting had ended. "A slowdown would be healthy as long as job growth doesn't turn negative."

A couple of days later, I drove through Oakland and Livermore to the vast emptiness of the Central Valley. About two hours from San Francisco, I stopped at Gustine, a settlement that is little more than some grocery stores, a drainage ditch, and a few hundred wooden houses. On the edge of town I took

FILIP PAGOWSKI; MAP © RAND MCNALLY

note of a new development—South Port, consisting of dozens of newly built houses on streets with Anglican names, like Canterbury Court. Its sales manager, a friendly fellow named Kendall Mitchell, said the properties were selling well, mostly to refugees from the Bay Area who don't mind the commute. "You can get two houses for the price of one here," he said as he showed me around a model house called the Saratoga, which proved to be a three-bedroom affair with a cathedral ceiling, a two-car garage, and a sizable back yard. "I can get you in here inside a week for a hundred and seven thousand seven hundred and seventy dollars," Mitchell continued. "That's with the stone fireplace included."

MOST reference books say that agriculture is still California's biggest industry, but Stephen Levy says that it has been overtaken by tourism and entertainment, a swath of the economy which, according to his figures, employed more than half a million people last year. Joel Kotkin, a Los Angeles-based writer, refers to the burgeoning entertainment sector as California's "cultural-industrial complex," and he believes that it will play a role in the state's future similar to the one that was played in its past by the military-industrial complex. "It's not just film," he told me recently. "It's television, music, video games, multimedia, theme parks, restaurants. They are all linked."

The Los Angeles Economic Development Council recently released figures showing that two hundred and sixty-two thousand people were employed last year in the business of motion pictures and television—an increase of eighty-three per cent since 1990. These numbers—and they don't include the legions of lawyers, accountants, agents, managers, cooks, beauticians, therapists, call girls, personal trainers, and so on who service the Hollywood workforce—were front-page news in the Los Angeles *Times*. Hollywood, it announced, "is rapidly moving from supporting player to star of the region's economy."

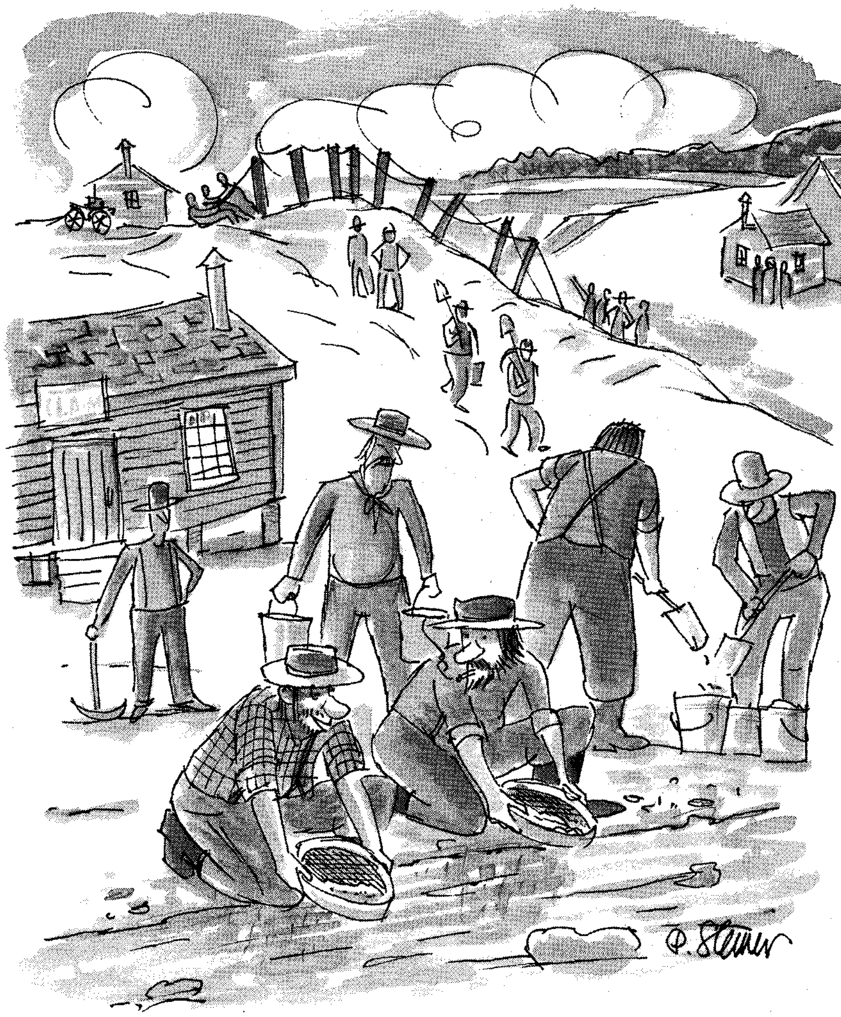
This shift is increasingly visible in the physical and social geography of Los Angeles. Once confined largely to the corridor of land from Culver City to Burbank, the entertainment industry is now spreading out. Santa Monica, for example, which was once a sleepy seaside town, is now home to several well-established "industry" companies, including M-G-M/United Artists, Cinergi, and MTV, as well as a number of newer outfits, such as Santa Monica Pictures, Todd-AO Studios West, and Activision. Real-estate prices have risen sharply, and some local residents now refer to the area as Brentwood South. Venice, Los Feliz, Culver City, and even the decrepit heart of Hollywood itself are being revitalized and gentrified by entertainment-industry money. If the DreamWorks studio ever gets built on the thousand-acre site of Howard Hughes's old helicopter plant in Playa Del Rey, the film colony will have extended its laager almost to Los Angeles Airport.

"We couldn't connect. He kept spouting technobabble, and I, of course, kept coming back with psychobabble."

West Hollywood, which I started visiting in the mid-eighties, has also been transformed. Back then, parts of Sunset Strip were considered dangerous and seedy; now, the Strip is packed every night, as hordes of young and not so young revellers make their way from Bar Marmont to Skybar to Barfly. Even Ben Frank's, the all-night diner at Sunset and Alta Loma, has been made over; it is currently called Mel's Drive-In, and on Sunday at lunchtime it looks like a casting call for "Melrose Place." "Everybody I know, their jobs have gotten better. Things are going well," Cynthia Desir, a self-described "real Westside girl," told me from her booth at Mel's. Desir's mother was killed in the Northridge earthquake in 1994, which soured her on Los Angeles for a while, but now she lives in Hollywood, works for Naked Lunch, a restaurant company, and is writing a script. ("Everybody in L.A. is writing a script," she said. "You have to or they don't renew your lease.")

Joel Kotkin lives a few minutes from Mel's, and he turned out to be a fast-talking forty-five-year-old New Yorker who moved west twenty-seven years ago. "The development of California is one of the great stories, and I wanted to be the one who wrote it—or some of it, anyway," he said. Like Levy, Kotkin believes that the media have grossly underplayed the West Coast revival, and he appears determined to correct the imbalance himself. "California's hold on the science- and culture-based industries of the future remains remarkably strong and without parallel either domestically or globally," he wrote in a 1996 report, "California: A Twenty-First Century Prospectus." "In contrast to classic mass production industries, these economic endeavors can not be easily duplicated by shifting production to lower-cost environments."

The latter point is key. Every so often somebody writes about "the next Hollywood" or "the next Silicon Valley," but they invariably fail to explain why Hollywood and Silicon Valley have remained at the leading edge of their respective industries for so long, despite the fact that both are congested, polluted, and expensive. Kotkin's answer, which he gleaned from recent academic literature on economic geography, is that both these places have evolved into self-sustaining "regional networks."



"Of course I hope to find gold. But my real goal is spiritual growth and inner peace."

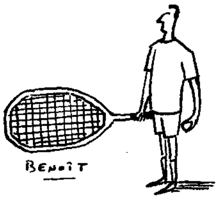
The basic ideas behind this concept go back to the Victorian economist Alfred Marshall, but they were resurrected by Michael Piore, an economist at M.I.T., and Charles Sabel, a professor at Columbia, in their 1984 book, "The Second Industrial Divide." Piore and Sabel studied the craft industries of central Italy, where they found large numbers of small firms producing high-fashion versions of traditional goods, such as shoes, suits, bags, furniture, and ceramic tiles. The key to the area's success, they concluded, was that it was geographically dense but economically decentralized. Local firms competed against each other for sales but coöperated in things like employee training, marketing, and learning about the latest fashions. This system, which Piore and Sabel dubbed "flexible specialization," allowed the area to adapt quickly and produce high-quality goods for which customers were willing to pay a premium.

Economists have identified regional networks in places as diverse as Baden-Württemberg (machine tools), Georgia (carpets), and nineteenth-century Lancashire (where, according to Marshall, the textile industry was "in the air"). A few years ago, Annalee Saxenian, a professor at Berkeley, published an influential book entitled "Regional Advantage," in which she identified Silicon Valley as another important regional network and argued that its success was due to a distinctive business culture, which she labelled a "network-based industrial system." When I spoke to Saxenian recently, she said that while she hadn't studied the film industry closely, she agreed with Kotkin that there are important resemblances between Hollywood and Silicon Valley. "You have these very fluid labor markets and these communities of highly skilled people who recombine repeatedly. They come together for one project—in this case a new film, in Silicon Valley it would be a new firm—and then they move on," she said. "The system allows for a lot of flexibility and adaptiveness."

The parallels don't stop there. Both Silicon Valley and Hollywood have their own languages, a permissive attitude toward risk-taking, and a highly effective grapevine. Computer-industry executives don't like spending five hundred thousand dollars for a three-bedroom house in Mountain View any more than film-studio executives like handing over a million dollars for a similar house in Brentwood, but neither can afford to be anywhere else. "Information about new markets and new technology flows very quickly," Saxenian said. "This sustains the importance of geographic proximity, despite the fact that, theoretically, the technology allows you to be anywhere."

The implications of such academic work for California's future are profound. Ever since Cecil B. De Mille rented an L-shaped barn at the corner of Selma and Vine, the film industry, with its itinerant workforce and fly-by-night business practices, has been widely dismissed as a world unto itself. If Saxenian and Kotkin are correct, however, Hollywood actually prefigured a time in which Fordist mass production was replaced, at least partly, by the decentralized creation of individually designed goods, like films and video games. Most countries—let alone states—don't have a single important regional network within their borders. California has two, and they are both in industries where the potential for future growth appears to be unlimited.

Of course, the vast majority of Californians don't work in Hollywood or Silicon Valley. A few years ago, David Friedman, a Los Angeles business consultant, persuaded A.T.&T. and the City of Los Angeles to sponsor a research project that would examine those parts of the Southern California economy which weren't in the newspaper headlines. It was a project that Friedman had long wanted to undertake. When he was a graduate student at M.I.T., he carried out a similar exercise in Japan and turned it into a prize-winning book, "The Misunderstood Miracle." After returning to the United States, Friedman became a corporate lawyer, but he always wanted to return to economics. So, having obtained the necessary financing, he and a group of researchers started going through Los Angeles business listings and trade directories, calling small firms, and asking them about their businesses. "We would say, 'We don't want any money from you, but could you please tell us what you do?'" he recalled when I visited him recently in his office downtown. "They would hesitate and say, 'You want to talk to *us*?'"



Friedman quickly learned that the Southern California economy was almost as diverse as its population. In East Los Angeles, he discovered a bicycle-maker, an oil-pipeline manufacturer, and the world's largest producer of tortilla chips. Downtown, he found hundreds of fashion businesses, many of them turning out their designs in local apparel factories. Out in the San Gabriel Valley, he came across a few hundred Asian firms that were making computers, and computer parts, for the Chinese market. "You literally could find no data on these jobs," Friedman told me. "Nobody had ever been to speak to these people. This stuff might as well exist in Bolivia for all the attention it gets around here." The research team concluded that Los Angeles County was still one of the biggest manufacturing centers in the country, and that up to half of the people employed in the region were working for firms of a hundred people or less. Of eighteen thousand five hundred companies surveyed, most were under fifteen years old, and many had been founded by immigrants. "The California élite is wildly unprepared for the type of economy that is generating the state's growth," Friedman said.

A few days after speaking to Friedman, I went for a two-hour drive with José Legaspi, a Mexican-American who has built more than a dozen supermarkets and shopping centers in Latino areas of Los Angeles. Legaspi, who is forty-five, arrived in Boyle Heights thirty-one years ago, and he still lives in East Los Angeles. I met him at his office in Montebello, an affluent Hispanic district about twenty minutes east of downtown; we drove west through Pico Rivera and Huntington Park into South Central, where the riots began in 1992, then took the Harbor Freeway north and circled back through the Eastside. "For a long time, the big retailers were not interested in the Hispanic market, but that is changing now," Legaspi told me as we passed along Pacific Avenue, a bustling thoroughfare in Huntington Park which has replaced downtown as the principal Latino shopping area. "When you have any big and powerful economic market, businesspeople have to figure out how to tap into it. Money has a wonderful way of changing behavior."

To somebody familiar with central Detroit, the South Side of Chicago, or East New York, the striking thing about the poor areas of Los Angeles is how many factories and shops they contain. Areas like Toy Town, Commerce, and Vernon look the way Long Island City must have looked fifty years ago, full of dust and trucks and grime. Some of the factories in these areas are no doubt sweatshops, but by no means all of them are, and, perversely, even the sweatshops demonstrate that capitalism has not abandoned these neighborhoods, as it has abandoned poor areas in other cities. The commercial districts that were burned down during the 1992 looting have been largely reconstructed, mainly owing to the efforts of Rebuild LA, a public-private partnership that was set up after the riots. The major problem facing Legaspi these days, he told me, was not finding companies or banks willing to invest in minority areas but finding enough space there for them to develop. "There is very little land available. I am looking for a site to build a multiplex cinema, but I can't find one," he said.

I asked Legaspi about a recent report from the Rand corporation, a public-policy research group, that cast doubt on whether many recent immigrants are likely to move into the middle class. "Most Hispanics have a middle-class mentality. Their income may not be middle-class, but their mentality is," he replied. "They have a very strong drive for self-improvement, for their children to be educated, for home ownership, and against state handouts." Legaspi could point to his own experience as an example of how immigrants can move up in California society. After graduating from Loyola University, in Los Angeles, he started representing tenants in real-estate transactions, then moved into developing properties himself. Today he does business as far afield as Oakland and Mexico City; his daughter goes to private school in Pasadena; and his two sons both attend élite state universities. Legaspi admitted that he is not a typical case, but he maintained that he isn't an isolated example, either. "I graduated with nine hundred students at Roosevelt High School, in East L.A., and a lot of them are businesspeople and professionals," he told me.

Gregory Rodriguez, a research fellow at Pepperdine University, has provided some evidence that supports Legaspi's argument. Unlike many researchers, who gather data on individuals, Rodriguez looked at household-income figures, which seems reasonable. (Many immigrants live in households with more than one worker.) He concluded that about one in three foreign-born Latino households in Southern California is middle-class—defined either as a household that earns more than thirty-five thousand dollars a year or as a family that owns its own home. Rodriguez also found that Hispanic immigrants are making progress over time. Among those who arrived in the previous ten years, only about nine per cent owned their own homes; among those who arrived in the sixties, more than fifty per cent were owner-occupiers.

THE challenge facing California is to insure that this sort of progress continues. "The economic opportunities are great, but we could still blow it," Stephen Levy told me. "California's future depends on how Californian businesses and residents come to terms with government." Levy's argument is simple: the well-paying industries of the future will require highly skilled workers, and these can be either grown at home or imported. The first option requires resurrecting California's public-education system, which was once the envy of the nation; the second involves providing public facilities and cultural amenities, so that skilled people from elsewhere will want to move to the state. Either way means spending more public money—something that has proved extremely difficult since 1979, when California voters voted to sharply reduce their property taxes by passing Proposition 13.

The pessimistic view of California is cogently presented in a forthcoming book, "Paradise Lost," by Peter Schrag, a former editorial-page editor of the Sacramento *Bee*. Schrag explains how much of California's current prosperity is based on the universities, colleges, and roads that were built in the two decades after the Second World War by three progressive governors: Earl Warren, Goodwin Knight, and (especially) Pat Brown. Since the passage of Proposition 13, California has been forced to curtail its capital investments in everything except prisons. (Since 1984, the state has opened twenty-one of them, bringing its portfolio to thirty-three.) In the national rankings of state-education spending per pupil, California has slipped to forty-third. In 1994, the National Assessment of Education Progress found that only eighteen per cent of Californian fourth graders could read proficiently, placing the state just ahead of Louisiana. Two years later, a similar study of math proficiency found California ranking alongside South Carolina and Alabama.

"In the end, the story of California's public sector over the past generation is a chronicle of a place that has been living on and drawing down its accumulated social capital," Schrag writes. Given that the state's dominant voting bloc is older whites, while the most intensive users of public services are young members of minority groups, he sees no obvious way out of the current fiscal impasse. Nor is he alone in his skepticism. Stephen Carroll, an economist at Rand, told me, "There are a lot of very nasty trends in place. None of them is immutable, but it is going to take a very significant change in attitudes and in the nature of political leadership." Carroll co-wrote a recent report that predicted a six-billion-dollar shortfall in California's higher-education budget by 2015.

The gloomy argument can't be discounted, but there are some indications that California may be starting to move beyond Proposition 13, one of them being the recent approval of bond issues to finance school-building in a number of localities. Many Californians seem willing to pay somewhat higher taxes if they know exactly how the money is to be spent. Meanwhile, fast-growing areas such as Riverside–San Bernardino have shown that it is possible to construct schools and provide public services by imposing user fees on residents. As time passes, these trends seem likely to strengthen. The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, which was formed by the campaigners for Proposition 13, still has tens of thousands of members, but they tend to be of retirement age. Meanwhile, the Hispanic voting bloc, which has a strong interest in public spending, finally seems to be stirring, as was demonstrated by the 1996 defeat of the Republican congressman Bob Dornan, in Orange County.

Perhaps the most encouraging sign of all is that California's economy seems capable—so far, at least—of powering on regardless of the state's political problems. "Look at Orange County," David Friedman told me. "They virtually stopped the government. A year and a half later, not only does nobody care but the county is voted the best place to live in America." (The survey was carried out by "Places Rated Almanac.") Soon after I spoke to Friedman, the force of his argument was brought home to me when the Ford Motor Company said that it was moving the headquarters of its struggling Lincoln Mercury division from Detroit to Irvine. The announcement marked the first time that a major American auto company had decided to shift one of its major divisions out of Michigan, and it shocked car-industry veterans. "We want to get connected to the Californian attitude," Robert Rewey, Ford's vice-president of sales and marketing, told the Los Angeles *Times*. "We have to throw away our previous assumptions."

A willingness to jettison assumptions and try different things isn't just a cultural quirk; it is California's greatest economic asset. As long as the state maintains its openness—openness to new ideas, openness to new investments, and openness to new people—its prospects are good. If Californians can combine this flexibility with a rediscovered willingness to invest in public services, infrastructure, and education, then historians might someday study the state in the way that they used to study Japan, Sweden, and, indeed, California itself: as a model economy. ♦

"We're from the Neighborhood Watch Committee. We've heard you're wearing a fake Rolex."

ANNALS OF ARCHITECTURE

DESERT COOL

Nostalgia for a life style of cocktails, cigars, Sinatra, and poolside cha-cha-cha has made Palm Springs hip again.

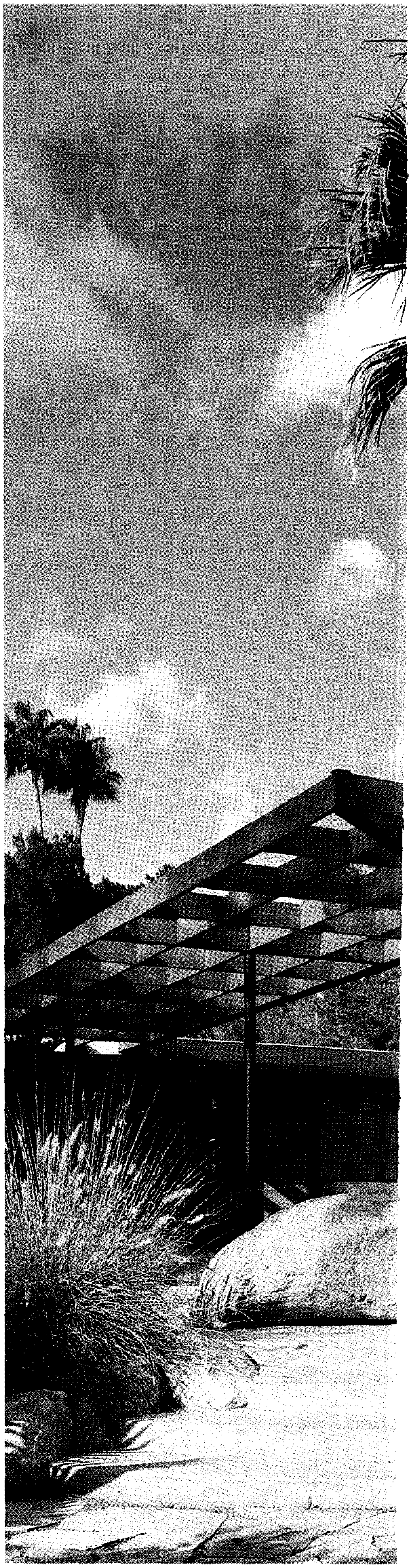
BY KURT ANDERSEN

THE first time a no longer fashionable style came back into fashion was probably in the eighteenth century, when architects became obsessed with classical Greek and Roman forms. The cycle of aesthetic rejection, oblivion, and renaissance, which took a millennium to play out in that instance, had speeded up considerably by the middle of this century: Tiffany lamps and Victorian houses, for instance, were only sixty or seventy years old when, to a gay and proto-yuppie avant-garde, these fusty, great-auntish grotesqueries suddenly came to seem charming and desirable. In our present hypertrophied consumer age, it takes even less time for the culture to move through a complete taste wave, from peak to valley to peak again—no more than thirty or forty years. The phenomenon has now become predictable enough to constitute a kind of postmodern sociocultural law.

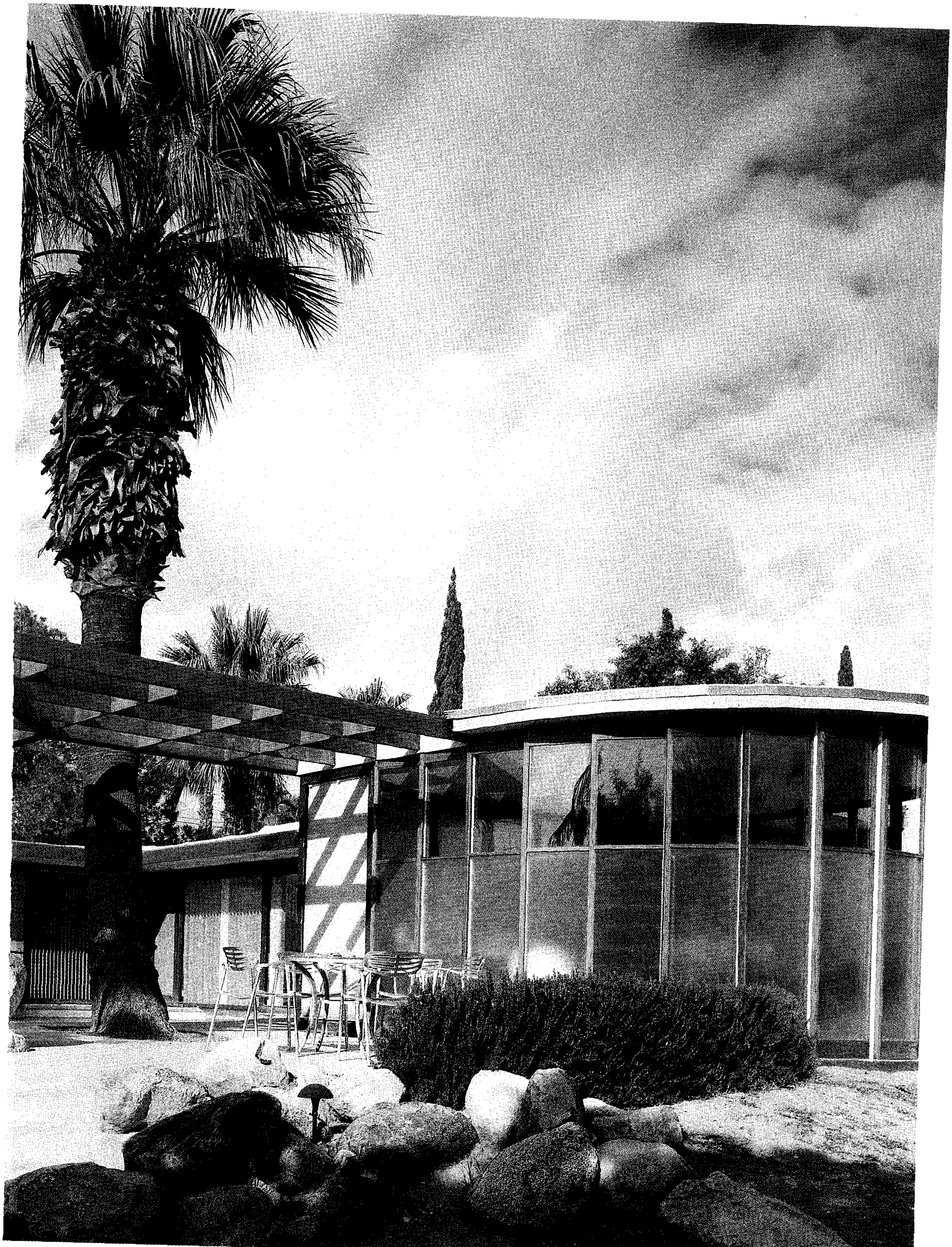
Take Palm Springs, California. From the beginning of the great freeway era until the time of the last New York World's Fair—or, put another way, from Marilyn Monroe's motion-picture début until her death—Palm Springs oozed California smart-set swank. Palm Springs was to the oversexed Hollywood of the fifties what East Hampton was to the overmoneyed Manhattan of the eighties: the getaway place a couple of hours east for all the swingingest people.

But after its first twenty years of chic, the place became decidedly, deeply uncool, and it stayed that way for another twenty years. The new golf-o-centric pseudo towns like Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert, which grew up during the seventies and eighties east of the city, between Dinah Shore Drive and P.G.A. Boulevard, reinforced the image of a character-free, climate-controlled elephants' graveyard, the world according to Gerald

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT POLIDORI

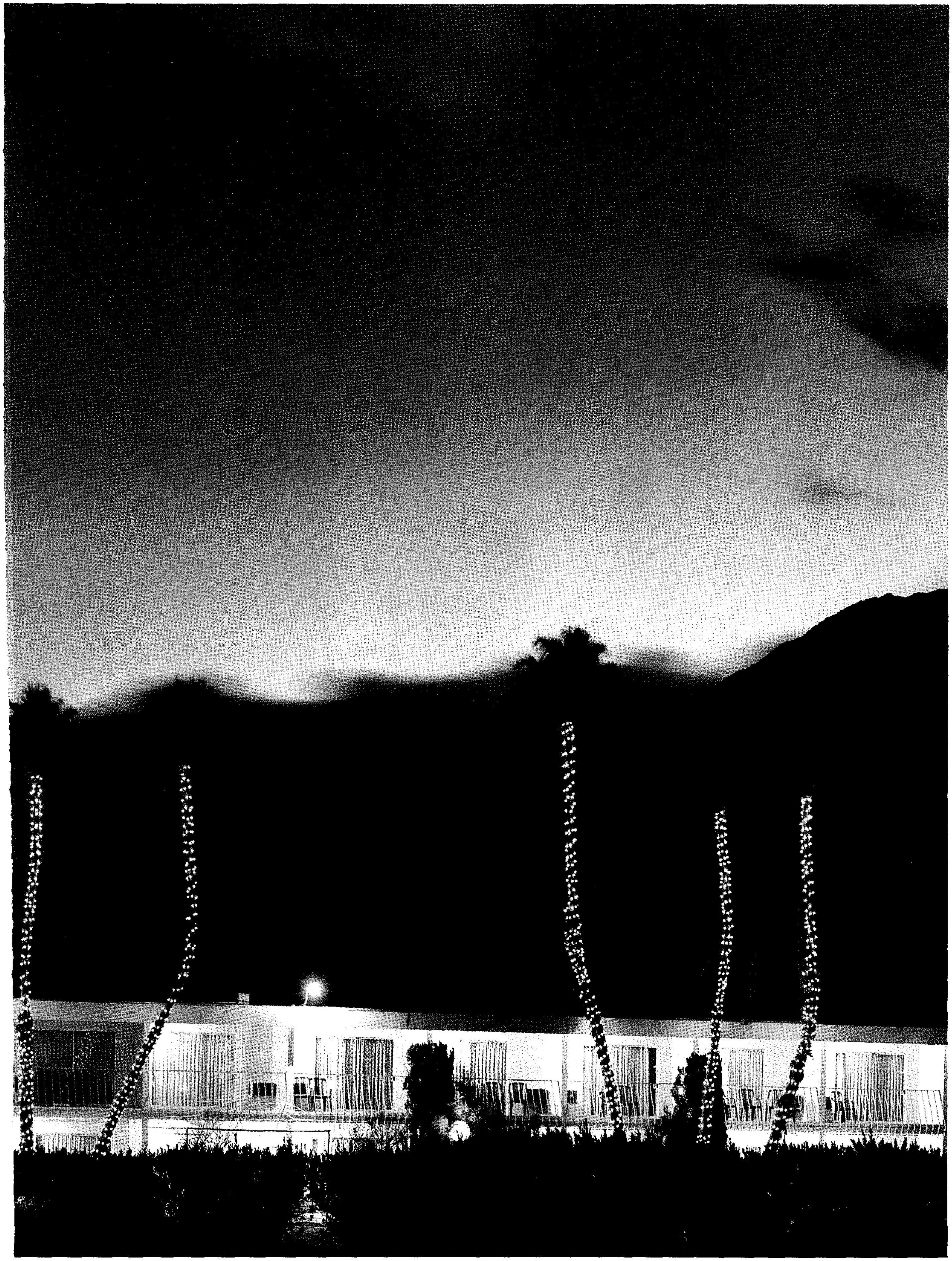


A closed gas station (left) and the Raymor



ewy house, both designed by Albert Frey. It's not just houses that have been preserved—the Rat Pack resort milieu has survived as well.

Mid-century modern at sunset: The Palm Court Inn, on Highway 111, was built in the nineteen-sixties. Palm Sprin



osh sprang up from the desert in a single moment and shared a single architectural dream—low, glassy, horizontal, sleek.

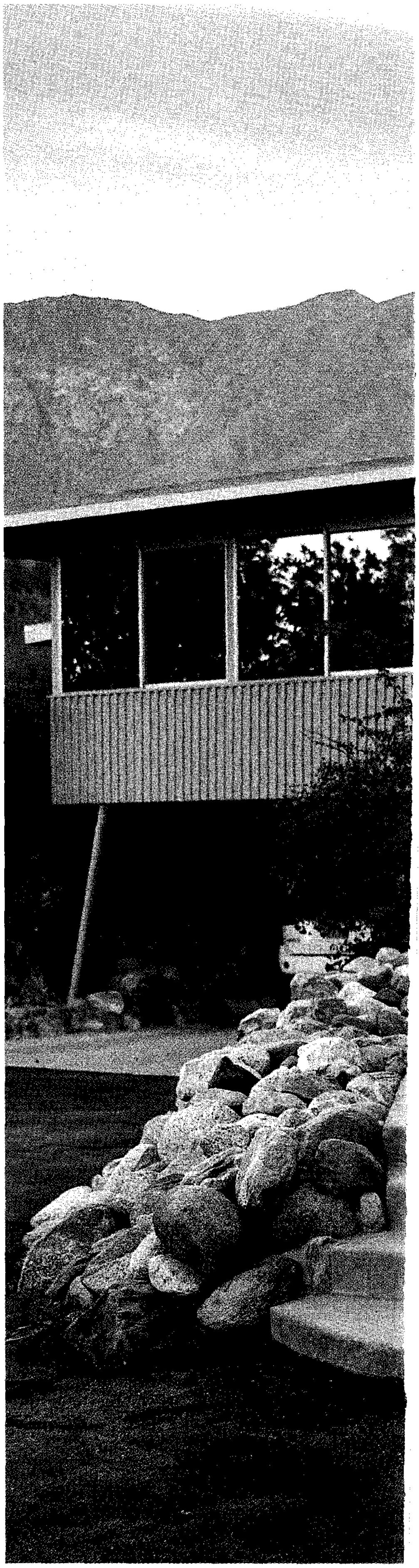
Ford. Harold Robbins and Zsa Zsa Gabor lived in Palm Springs; Sonny Bono became mayor.

But then comes the third, rehabilitative phase, which is now under way in Palm Springs. At first, the embrace is ironic, campy. In the nineteen-seventies, for instance, pediments and columns began appearing in serious new American architecture as tongue-in-cheek gestures, around the same time that the southern end of Miami Beach began to seem fetchingly zany. Soon tongues are removed from cheeks, and the aesthetically correct take goes from contempt to amusement and on to earnest adoration, all within a decade.

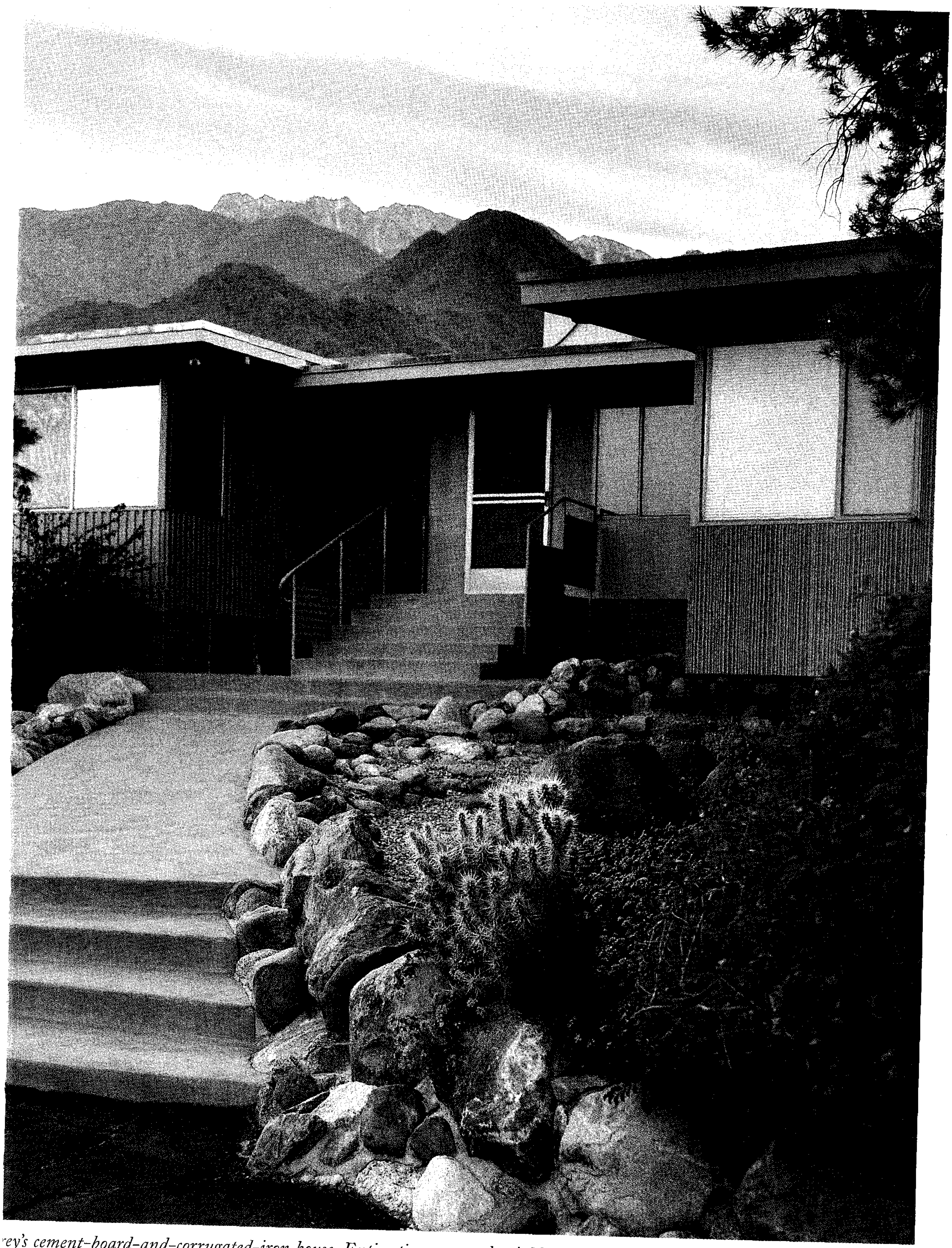
The connoisseurship by baby boomers of mod, kitschy artifacts from their youth (amoeboid tabletops, plastic chairs, lava lamps) acquired serious momentum during the eighties. As this appreciation has extended outward and downward into the young heterosexual masses, it has taken the form of vicarious life-style nostalgia—nostalgia for the idealized young adulthood of one's parents (giant cocktails, lounge music, cigars, Sinatra, poolside cha-cha-cha). The 1996 film "Swingers" was a hit, and now Martin Scorsese is planning a Dean Martin biopic. Given this ascendant retro vector, plus the fact that the desert itself is a stylishly nineties kind of landscape—minimalist, unsentimental, extreme—the hipster rediscovery of Palm Springs was probably inevitable. Even the infrastructure seems serendipitously au courant: the four thousand sleek, giant white metal windmills west of town, acres and desolate acres of them in the desert along the highway from L.A., look like a collaboration between Philippe Starck, Richard Meier, and George Lucas.

Because Palm Springs itself did not prosper during the seventies and eighties, developers had no incentive to rip down the first-generation architecture. So the snazzy haute-Cold War houses survive—entire time-warped neighborhoods of them. And, unlike the rich neighborhoods of Los Angeles, where nineteen-thirties pseudo-Colonials are next to nineteen-eighties pseudo-Mediterraneans that are next to nineteen-fifties pseudo-Tudors and seventies suburboid mansions, Palm Springs posh sprang up in a single moment and shared a single architectural dream: desert modernism—low, glassy, horizontal, sleek. It remains perfect. Before the twenty-first century is finished, Palm Springs will seem as remarkable and precious as places like Georgetown or Brooklyn Heights do today, an American urban period piece preserved in situ.

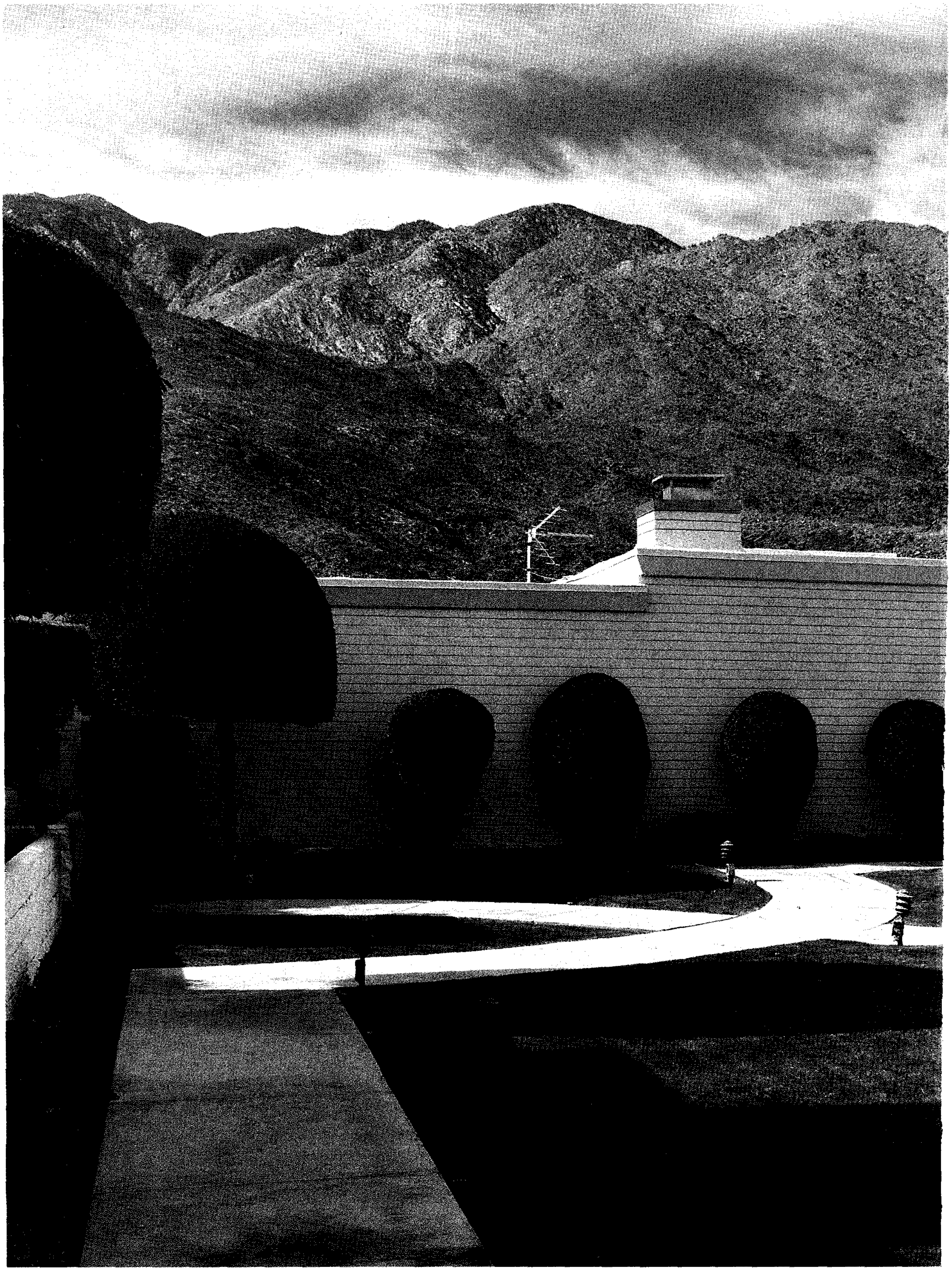
THERE'S a surprisingly high concentration of houses whose significance derives not from the fact that Elvis or Zsa Zsa once slept in



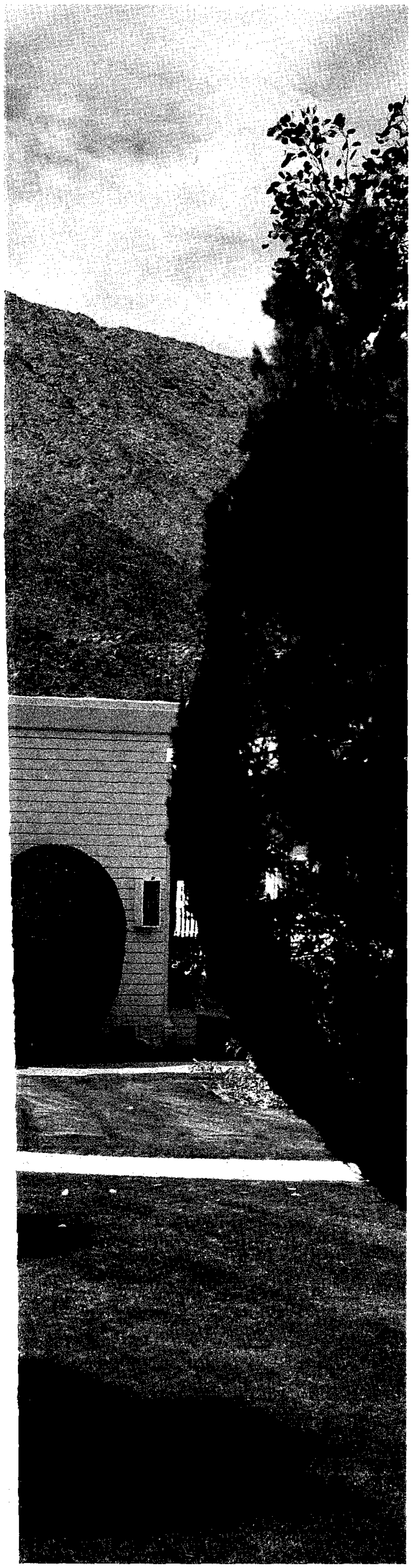
The Bank of America Building (left). And Alber



ey's cement-board-and-corrugated-iron house. Entire time-warped neighborhoods of haute-Cold War houses exist intact.



Manicured trees in a back-yard garden in the flats of Palm Springs. And (right) the interior of the Elrod House, designed

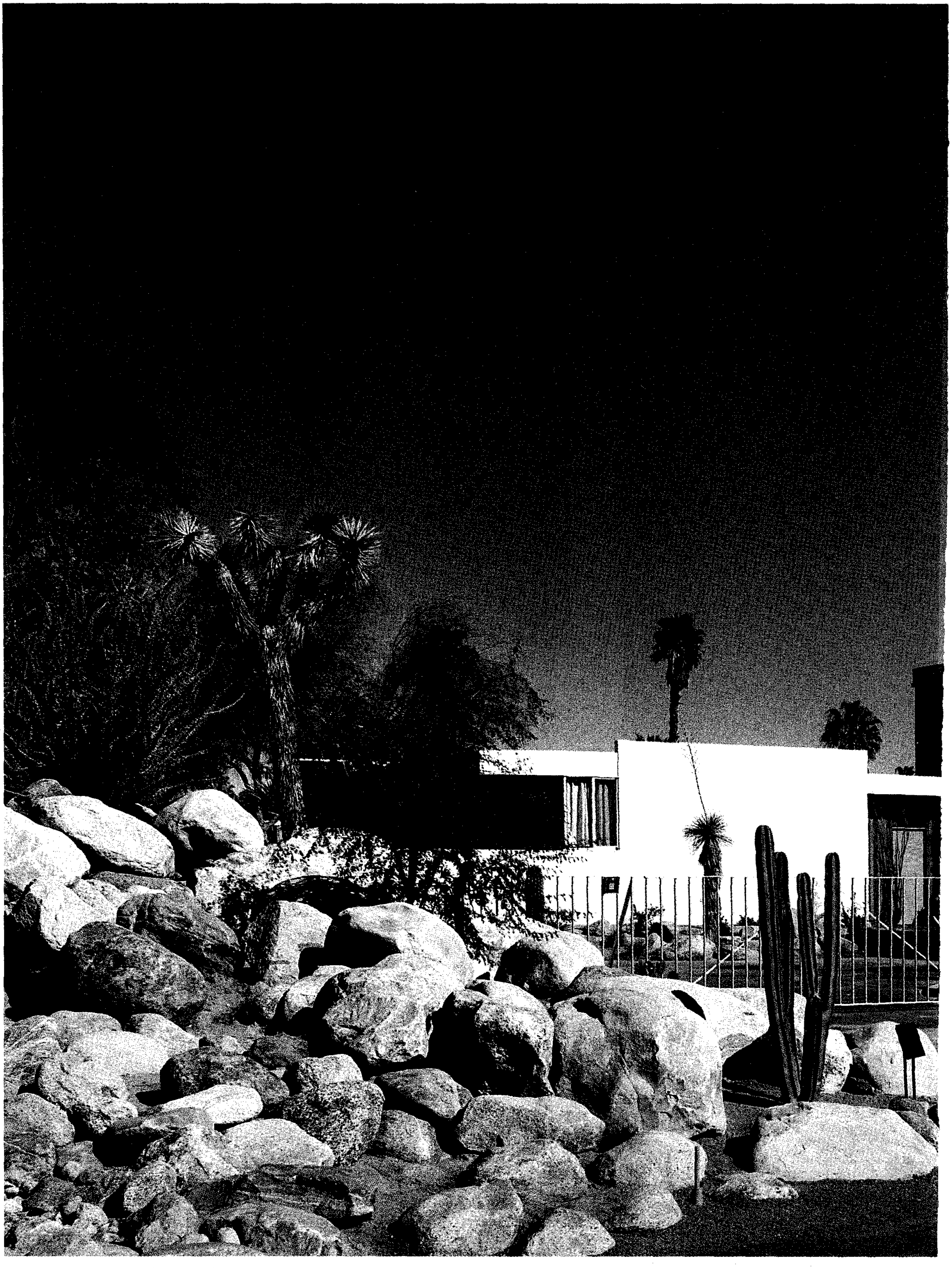


hn Lautner in the late nineteen-sixties.

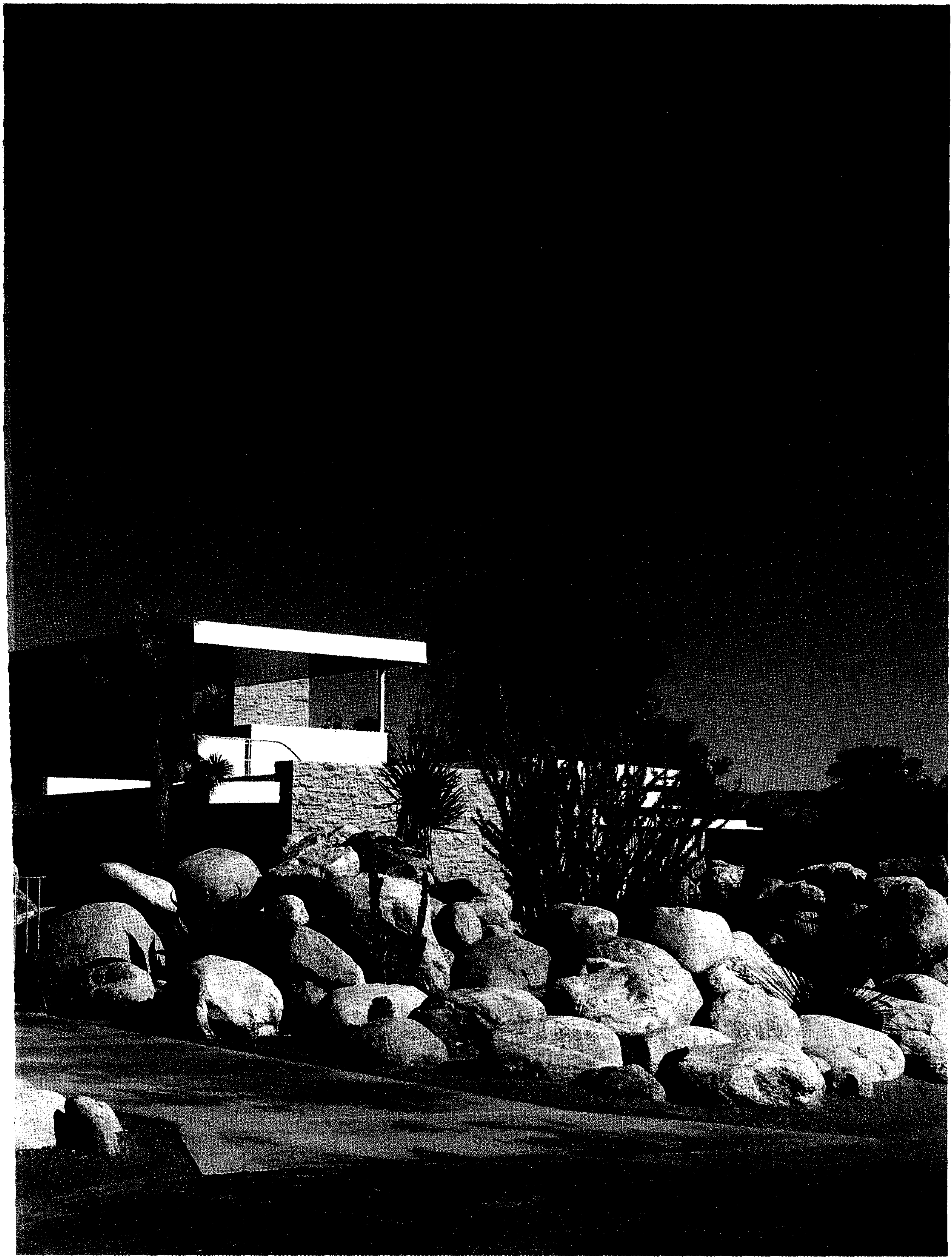
them. The California modernist star John Lautner designed Bob Hope's house, and Richard Neutra designed a Palm Springs house in 1947 for the Edgar Kaufmanns—the Fallingwater Kaufmanns. Albert Frey, who emigrated from Zurich sixty-seven years ago and still lives in his own glass house up on a San Jacinto Mountain ledge, designed the city hall, a 1946 house for the industrial designer Raymond Loewy, and an early-sixties gas station that is currently the subject of a contentious preservationist battle. (The local establishment doesn't quite get it: Palm Springs' official city architecture guide lists twenty-six notable buildings, none built after the thirties and almost all of them cute Spanish stucco or Old West vernacular.)

It's not just the buildings from the forties, fifties, and sixties that are remarkably well preserved and that seem to 1998 sensibilities unwittingly hip. Human vestiges of the Rat Pack resort milieu survive as well, which is definitely part of the ironic-cum-anthropological attraction of the place: imagine Williamsburg or Sturbridge Village if the actors in Colonial drag were real people from the eighteenth century. In Palm Springs, old guys and dolls of the Peter Lawford and Angie Dickinson generation, still well tanned and lubricious, drive their Cadillacs to supper at Melvyn's Restaurant and Lounge.

Do not rebuild it, and they will come. The people in black are now arriving and meeting with real-estate agents. The word "fabulous" is being uttered on Palm Canyon Drive. At John's Mid-Century Modern, a two-year-old resale store in a building designed by Frey, cosmopolite newcomers buy their plywood Eames chairs and George Nelson coffee tables (for a song, still). In 1992, an Ian Schrageresque hotelier refurbished the nineteen-twenties Korakia Pensione, which is now booked weeks in advance by movie people—cool movie people, like Laura Dern. During the last five years, hyperstylish men from New York and Los Angeles (the creative directors of *GQ* and Clinique, the director of the Isaac Mizrahi documentary "Unzipped," and so on) have bought houses. Magazines are using Palm Springs for fashion shoots, which has the effect of making the space-age desert-swinger aesthetic seem more intensely voguish to more people, which will result in more fashion shoots and videos, and then the arrival of more emigrants from Manhattan and Los Angeles. There's still no Miamified scene—no surplus tuna tartare, no V.I.P. rooms, no roving packs of supermodels. Give it a few years. "There's a feeling of Camelot," says Jim Moore, the *GQ* creative director, who bought his 1962 steel house in 1993 and has meticulously restored it. "I don't want it to change." ♦



Richard Neutra's Kaufmann house, from 1947. Given the fascination with swingy postwar design, plus the fact that the desert its



nineties kind of landscape—minimalist, unsentimental, extreme—the rediscovery of Palm Springs seems to have been inevitable.

A REPORTER AT LARGE

INVISIBLE MEN

Surviving in the shadows of Southern California has never been easy for Jesús Ruíz. But the Border Patrol's new crackdown has forced him—and thousands of other illegal workers—even deeper underground.

BY WILLIAM LANGEWIESCHE

FIVE million people live illegally in the United States. Two million live in California alone. More than half of those are Mexican, and by the standards they left behind almost all are doing well. Many now inhabit apartments in the barrios of Los Angeles and other cities, where they can blend with the large populations of legal immigrants and walk the streets openly, without worrying about arrest and deportation. Even for those who have settled outside the safety of the barrios, it is not a bad life, warmed as it is by hard work. But there are gradations to the experience, and they are severe. At one extreme are a few thousand squatters who have scattered into the construction-torn hills of northern San Diego County. They scavenge jobs and hide in furtive groups, inhabiting cracks in the affluent suburbs, and enduring ferocious new pressures from the United States Border Patrol.

There have been Mexican squatters in San Diego for at least a hundred years, and at times they have been hunted, but never before so intensely. Three years ago, the local authorities razed the last of the old established camps—regular shantytowns, some with shanty bars and shanty churches. And the squatters who remain in the hills today are the ones who cannot be bulldozed away. Estimates of the numbers out there range from five thousand to forty thousand. Lacking contacts and knowledge that would allow them to reach safer ground, they crouch instead in farm sheds and camouflaged scrapwood shacks, and bear the weight of California's displeasure. There are too few of them to form an underclass, but they are the people who now occupy the lowest place in the entire United States.

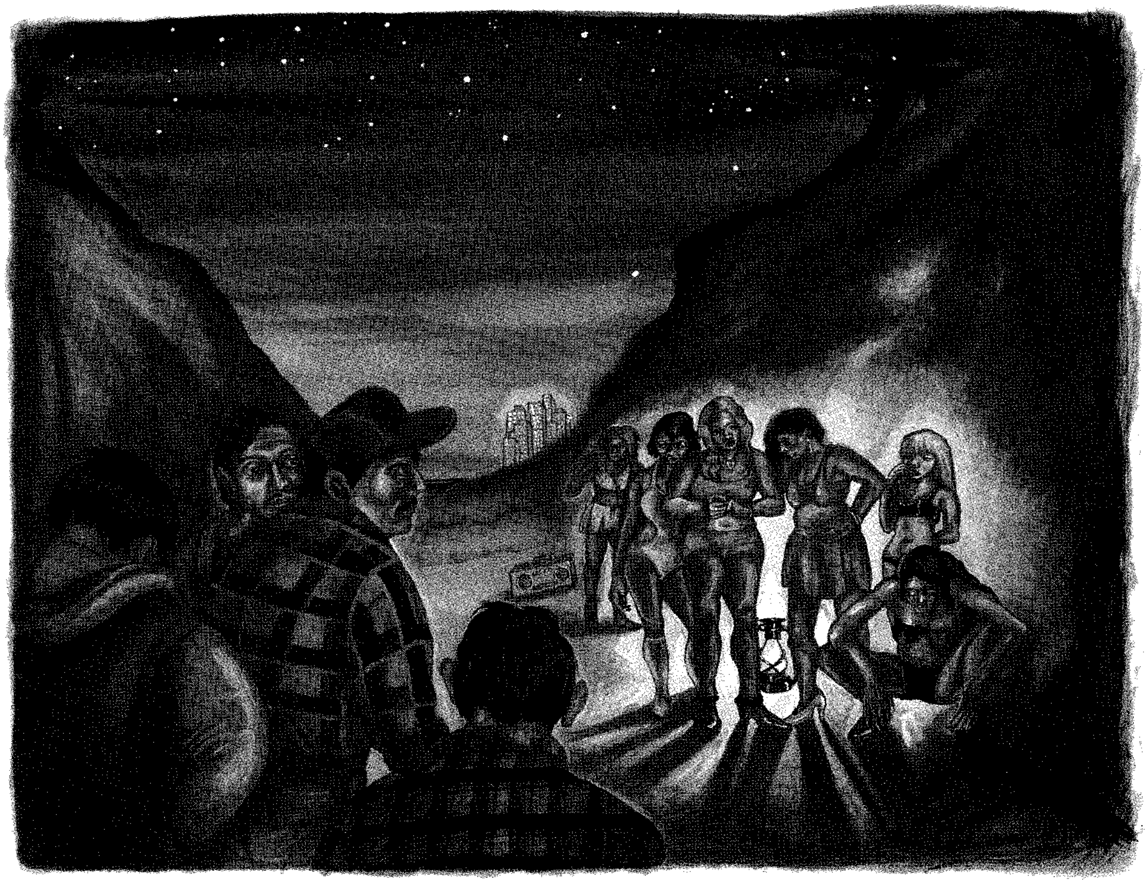
They are not easy to find. I spent days in January looking for them among the colliding coastal towns—Del Mar, Encinitas, Carlsbad, Oceanside—and east across twenty miles of fractured landscape to Escondido and the craggy mountains, which rise like a wall, imposing an end to the helter-skelter of the county's development. The search was a spiral descent through the rankings of illegal immigrants. Beyond the easily found apartment dwellers, beyond the well-housed crews on big vegetable and flower farms, I was led eventually to smaller farms, where the owners were not to know of my presence, and where the workers sometimes ran from my approach. Those workers were squatters, and felt hounded and insecure, but on private farmland they enjoyed some protection from the Border Patrol, so they lived one step above the bottom.

The bottom was a place I finally found fifty miles north of the border and just inland from the coast, in a brushy ravine known loosely as Los Olvidados, which means "the forgotten ones," although the people there were living like ghosts, unseen rather than out of mind. This ravine lay like a scar through an area of expensive residential developments with more uplifting names—La Costa, Marea, Serenata—which had spread in advancing patterns of half-million-dollar houses across the hilltops overlooking it. The houses had been painted in pastels, and given cathedral ceilings and high arched windows, and seemed so light and airy that they might have been inflated. The streets were clean. Some were protected by electric gates. The ravine, by contrast, seemed merely ugly—a steep-sided gulch about half a mile long, bisected by a high-tension power line and littered with piles of illegally dumped trash—the sort of place that San Diegans pass by and hardly see. But I had been told to stop and to notice that some of those trash piles had roofs and walls, and that the wind might carry the sound of men's soft whistles, and that on gray winter days smoke rose from campfires hidden among the stunted trees.

A rain had fallen. I clambered up an embankment and started down into the ravine, moving carefully along foot trails through the brush because I was concerned that I might be mistaken for the Border Patrol. The ravine's population was said to have been about a hundred last summer but to be fewer now. About halfway down, I heard voices and spotted a patch of tin roofing through the trees below. I was cut off by a gully and forced onto another trail, which eventually led to a windowless hut with a padlocked door. The hut seemed to have been abandoned, if only temporarily. But just down the trail beyond it I came to a larger shack that I now know as the home of Jesús Ruíz.

I called "*Buenas tardes*" from a distance, and was answered quietly from the inside. The shack perched on a narrow terrace dug into the hillside fifty feet above the floor of the ravine. It was built of plywood and corrugated plastic, patched with black plastic sheeting, and held together with nails, branches, and the frame of a wheelbarrow, which had been wedged into the dirt. Trash spilled down a steep slope below it. The bushes smelled of urine. The center of the shack was a roofed but open-sided living area, which looked out over the ravine below; it was joined at one end to a three-walled kitchen, with rough shelving and a gas burner on a plywood table, and at the other end to a windowless sleeping room about the size of a big mattress. The sleeping room had a door that could be locked with a bicycle cable.

Jesús Ruíz sat in the living area on a plastic garden chair. He was twenty-two years old—a short, Indian-looking man dressed in a windbreaker, jeans, and untied basketball shoes. He had high cheekbones, clear eyes, and a musical voice, which imparted a peculiar quizzicality to his speech. He spoke no English. His Spanish was better than mine, but crude nonetheless: he confused "he" and "she," and had problems with the use of the past and future tenses. This was because he was a Zapotec, from the Mexican state of Oaxaca, and he spoke primarily Zapoteco. But he was not given to conversation in any language. After he invited me in, we sat mostly in silence. He did not understand my interest in his life. He said that, like the other squatters at Los Olvidados, he was a day laborer. He found jobs by knocking on doors or standing on the streets. Usually, he worked as a gardener.



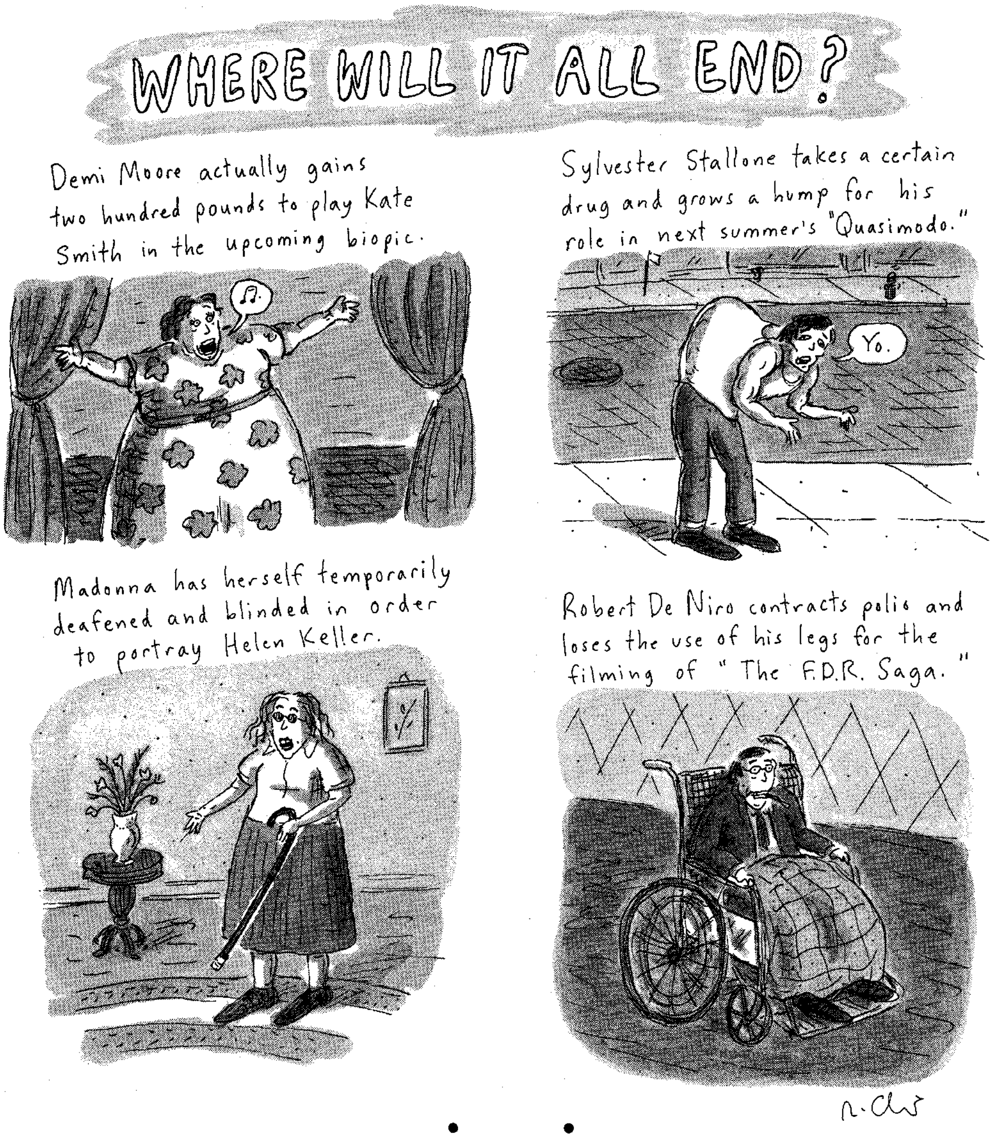
The forgotten ones: They crouch in farm sheds and camouflaged scrap-wood shacks, and bear the weight of California's displeasure.

SUE COE

During that first visit, he did not mention the Border Patrol or deportations or his long experience with coming back across the line. All that may have seemed too obvious to him. He told me that he had moved north in 1991, and had returned to Oaxaca four times since. He might have been talking about vacation travel. He said he preferred to fly from Tijuana rather than to take the bus. When I expressed surprise, he explained impatiently that the flying was faster than the driving—five hours instead of eight days. He meant that his time was worth money. Otherwise he would have stayed in Mexico.

I was more interested in why he stayed here, under siege in Los Olvidados, instead of moving on, at least to the relative safety of a farm. He would say only that he did not like hard labor. But, as I later learned, there was more to his immobility. Like other Zapotecs in the ravine, he came from a parched mountain village called Santa Ana Yareni, five hours from the city of Oaxaca in a four-wheel drive—a place so isolated and Indian that for years it had lacked any connection to the labor market of the United States. But, beginning in 1984, many of the men there were recruited by a California flower-grower who needed workers for his farm, in Somis, an hour north of Los Angeles. The Zapotecs were taken by train to Tijuana and smuggled to Somis, and there they were enslaved: held in a compound in perpetual debt, frightened into submission by warnings about the Border Patrol, and forced to work sixteen hours a day. Some of the men eventually sought help. In 1990, a federal grand jury in Los Angeles indicted the grower on charges of slavery. The slavery charges were dropped in a plea bargain, but he pleaded guilty to corporate racketeering, as well as to labor and immigration violations, after a complex prosecution that navigated the difficult distinctions between safety and captivity, hard labor and servitude.

The Zapotec slaves had meanwhile fled south to the ravine at Los Olvidados, where a few villagers had already established themselves, because of the presence nearby of an aging hippyish couple who liked to drink and party with them. The couple had visited Santa Ana Yareni, and had once taken a village elder to Marine World to "blow his mind." This was the closest thing the Zapotecs now had to a useful immigrant network in California, and it wasn't much. The trauma of the Somis slave camp had set them back at just the wrong time in American history—four years after the great immigration amnesty of 1986, and at a time when political sentiment had turned strongly


WHERE WILL IT ALL END?
Demi Moore actually gains two hundred pounds to play Kate Smith in the upcoming biopic.
♫
Sylvester Stallone takes a certain drug and grows a hump for his role in next summer's "Quasimodo."
Yo.
Madonna has herself temporarily deafened and blinded in order to portray Helen Keller.
Robert De Niro contracts polio and loses the use of his legs for the filming of "The F.D.R. Saga."
R. Chast

against immigration. The attraction of Los Olvidados was at first the freedom it offered, the day-to-day choices to work at one job or another, or simply to rest in the ravine. But within a few years that freedom meant little.

Jesús Ruíz was too young to have been a slave, but he was affected by the Somis experience just the same. In 1991, his father fell to his death while planting corn on the precipitous mountain above Santa Ana Yareni. Jesús was sixteen. After the funeral, he decided to head north, and he knew of nowhere to go but Los Olvidados. In January, when I first met him, he faced the same lack of choice.

Outside his shack, a little stuffed elephant hung by its trunk on a string from a tree. Jesús said that he had three children. The first—a girl now four years old—was born in Mexico. After spending nearly a year alone with the baby, his young wife, Juana, had insisted on coming north to unite the family. "She wanted to see California," Jesús told me. "She thought everything would be easy."

In 1993, Juana took the baby on the bus to Tijuana and, after sneaking across the border, moved into the shack. Everything was not easy. Then, as now, water had to be hauled in yoked buckets down the steep slope from a ridge-top hydrant. But, aside from the threat of sudden deportation, the living conditions in the ravine were no worse than they had been within her memory in Oaxaca. Jesús wanted Juana to be realistic about coming north. "I told her, 'You have to work if you want to live here. That's the way it is in California.'" He got her a cleaning job three days a week. There were other women living in the ravine, and they helped with the baby.

But then she got pregnant with their second daughter and had to stop working. When she went into labor, Jesús took her to an emergency room and naïvely signed her in for a two-day stay at the hospital. The hospital did not ask about the couple's immigration status. The baby was born an American citizen, and Jesús was presented with a staggering bill for four thousand dollars. Slowly, he managed to pay it. By then, the family had moved into a two-bedroom apartment in Carlsbad with seven other Oaxacans and were beginning to live the urban lives of more typical illegal immigrants. At a vegetable-packing operation near the ravine, I met an old Oaxacan peasant with a pencil mustache and a straw hat, who described the horror not of such overcrowding but of the unnatural vertical stacking that is part of apartment life—the footsteps above and the quarrelling below, the distance from the sweet soil. Jesús and Juana were less attached to the land, but they realized that they were saving no money. In 1996, they returned to Los Olvidados. Jesús assured me that Juana did not mind. When she got pregnant again, she enrolled in a prenatal program, which cut the medical bill in half. The family's third child and its second American citizen, a boy, was born last September.

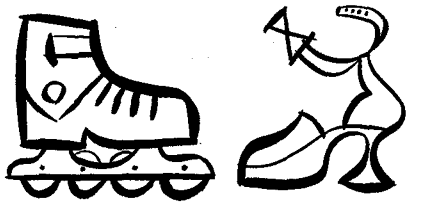
ONE rainy afternoon in November, 1997, when the new baby was two months old, the Border Patrol raided the ravine. Jesús was returning on his bicycle when he spotted the vans parked on the nearby streets. He could do nothing to help his family, and he slipped away. The Border Patrol agents closed in on the ravine, moving heavily down the trails with their radios squawking. They were preceded by a chorus of whistles and warning cries: "*La Migra!*," short for *Inmigración*. The agents were slowed by the slickness of the ground, and, as a result, almost everyone in the lowland escaped. Juana, up on the steep hillside, had her babies to think of and could not run. A cousin who also lived in the ravine was visiting her. The two women shut themselves into the darkness of the sleeping room and tried to soothe the children.

The United States Border Patrol is not a timid organization. In San Diego County, where a third of its sixty-eight hundred agents are deployed, there were more than a quarter of a million apprehensions and arrests in fiscal 1997 alone. That number is about half of what it was just two years earlier—a reduction that now seems to be undeniably the result of a tough new defensive effort initiated in October, 1994, throughout San Diego County, and especially along the critical fourteen miles of border facing Tijuana. The effort, dubbed Operation Gatekeeper, is based on an increase in fences, surveillance, and front-line patrols, and also on a new commitment to patrolling north of the border. Within the confines of San Diego County, the operation has been a success. Its national significance is harder to judge. Critics say that illegal immigrants are simply bypassing the operation by moving a few miles to the east, or that, more ominously, apprehensions are down because the new defenses have forced a professionalization of the border crossing, which, in turn, means that the flow has become smarter and more difficult to stop. But Border Patrol agents are not prone to indulge in such doubts. San Diego is their sacred ground, and the success of Gatekeeper, however narrow, has at last given them a scent of victory.

In Los Olvidados, the squatters imitate the heavily burdened agents yelling "Stop running, you Mexican motherfuckers!," and they boast about their own taunting responses of "*Chinga tu madre!*" It is not just a word game. The agents do sometimes club people, and they separate families during deportation and deliver terrified peasants by the thousand to the predators who inhabit the filthy streets of the Mexican border cities. Nevertheless, the Border Patrol is not, as its critics claim, an inherently abusive organization. Its arrests are routinely softened by a grudging respect between the pursuers and the pursued. In rare cases, this may lead agents simply to let people go. I'm guessing here, because no one will admit to such acts of grace. But when two rain-soaked agents finally got to Jesús' shack they found a frightened family inside, and after hearing that the babies were Americans they turned and went away. Still, Jesús had to assume that next time the outcome would be different. He had been captured twice already in 1997 and deported to Tijuana. This was not how he wanted to rear his children.

In the end, it was the talk of El Niño as much as the increasing pressure from the Border Patrol that drove the family apart. Even before the seasonal rains started, many of the women and children in the lowland had gone scurrying for shelter—some to local apartments but most back home to Mexico. After the November raid, the last of them left. The rain kept falling. Jesús reinforced the shack, but by early December the solitary living had become too hard for Juana. Jesús bought airline tickets for Mexico City and sent the family off to live there with a cousin. The departure left only two women in Los Olvidados—a toothless Chihuahuan, who slept in a tree house with a vicious little dog, and a peroxided hooker who frequented a colony of heavy drinkers on the far hillside. From Mexico City, Juana sent Jesús a note in Spanish, which he taped to the sleeping-room door: "Specially for you my love. I always want to be close to your side, but it is not easy. Night and day I think of you because I feel a coldness in my heart that you are not in my arms in order to hold you and to kiss your sweet lips. I love you and I miss you, but destiny has made us be apart from one another. The end."

I asked Jesús why Juana had not moved back to Santa Ana Yareni. He said that there was nothing for them there. I asked about their future. He said that it lay on the outskirts of Mexico City, where, with the money he would save now, he might eventually buy a piece of land and build a one-room house. It was something permanent to work toward. But I am not sure he really believed in it. He would be lucky to make three dollars a day in Mexico. His retirement plan was simply to grow old so he wouldn't have to eat much. He told me that he would visit his family in the summer of 1999, and that he would stay for two months before leaving again for California.



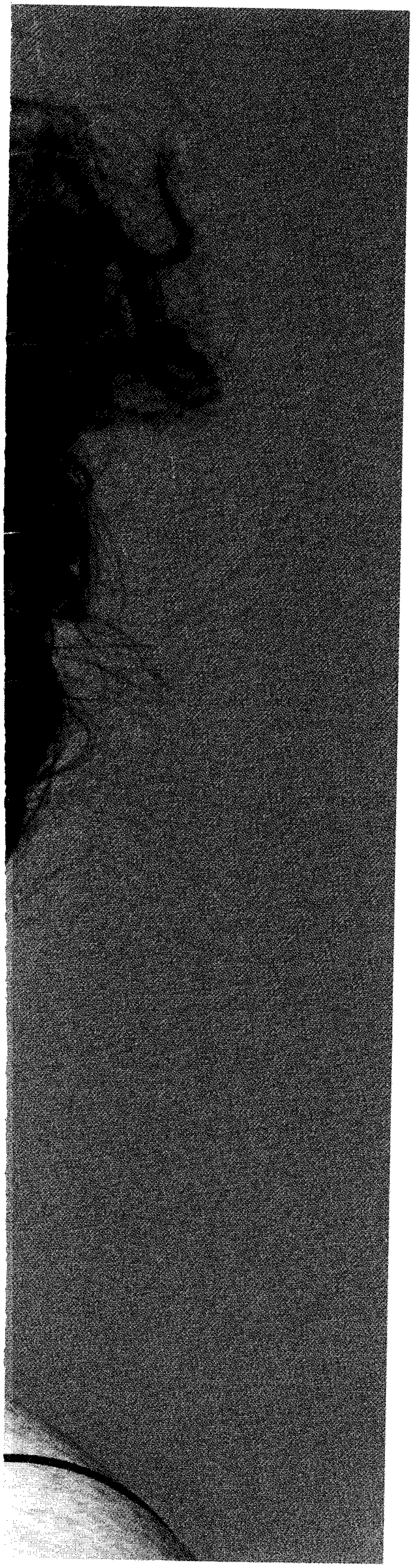
I said, "It's hard."

He said, "It's life."

Still, I wondered why he did not acknowledge his troubles. Was it politeness? Naïveté? A sense of privacy? For nearly two weeks, I kept coming back to talk to him. Only with time could I get him even to admit that within the ravine there is crime, that hard drugs are used, that men get crazy drunk and fight and set their shacks on fire, that men get sick and babies die, that the shacks are burglarized, that skinheads threaten Zapotecs on the street, that Chicano gangs attack and rob them within the ravine, that a man must be ready to run at all times, that capture by the Border Patrol is a serious setback. All this I had to learn first from other men. But Jesús had made a commitment to endure here illegally, and he insisted that it was the right commitment, and I came to realize that he described his life to himself as he described it to me. Only once, at night, over a beer that had slurred his speech, did he come close to expressing regret. He showed me a guitar, and said he was learning to play it. I asked him why, and he said, "So I'm not just hanging around crying." And even then he was not maudlin. He told me, too, that he enjoyed listening to music, especially *norteño* ballads—stories in song about love and violence and life underground in the United States. I noticed that Jesús had taken Juana's note off the door. We were not friends, but we could talk if I did not insult him with pity.

ONE step higher in the underground life, I found my way to a different group of squatters, who, because they had a little something to lose, were concerned that I not identify them by name. The group consisted of a dozen farmworkers who were mestizos from Michoacán. I spent several cold nights with them, huddled around a smoky wood-burning heater built of two fifty-gallon drums stacked horizontally and welded together. The men lived in a derelict chicken shed on a family farm that nestled against the steep slopes of the eastern mountains, about an hour from the coast.

The farm grew avocados. Most of the remaining farms in San Diego County are just such family operations, unable to survive without illegal workers. There are big farms, too, but, like



those elsewhere in California, they tend by now to hire legal workers, often unionized, and to house them more or less correctly. The small farmers are not necessarily bad people, but they lack the economies of scale. Rather than comply with burdensome regulations pertaining to the living conditions of farmworkers (whether illegal immigrants or not), they have simply dropped out of the system. For them, the beauty of the arrangement is its deniability. Near Escondido, a flower-grower said to me of his own foreman, "Manuel? Manuel? No, I don't know no Manuel. If you mean one of those wetbacks who come walking through here, I've got nothing to do with them." We understood each other perfectly. It was early evening, and he had studiously turned his back on the men who were settling into the shell of a wrecked greenhouse. Many other farmers similarly turn their backs. Their men become "trespassers," for whom they cannot be held responsible. And then, of course, every morning the farmers turn around and hire the same "trespassers," having at some point gone through the motions of checking their immigration documents.

The avocado-grower who employed the workers in the chicken shed did not know that I had been talking to them. I asked his permission only afterward, and he found a way to deny it. But I liked him. He was a hard, flat-bellied man of nearly seventy, a classic California grower—silver-haired, tanned, handsome, a Ronald Reagan type. He called his softer friends "puss guts." And he had a sense of humor. He said, "Fifteen pickers show up one morning, but only one's got papers, so I have to tell the others I'm real sorry but I can't use them. What happens? Two hours later, they show up again, and this time they've all got papers. There's only one problem—every one of these fellas was born on the same day, and every one of them crossed the border at the exact same time." He shrugged. The law did not require him to be an expert.

He thought of himself as a good employer. He told me he would never ask his workers to do something that he himself couldn't do. That was not necessarily a reassuring thought. He had hired college students on summer break, but they couldn't keep his pace for more than a morning. He had hired high-school athletes, but they didn't know how to dig or hammer. And that was in the past—the situation was worse today, of course. Finding Americans of any description had become practically impossible. He thanked God for the Mexicans, who came begging for the jobs and were strong pickers and knew how to dig and hammer and didn't whine or complain. He described what they went through, hour after hour, climbing the steep slopes of the groves carrying hundred-pound bags of easily bruised avocados. "You ought to try it," he said, eying me skeptically.

He said he got good work from the Mexicans by staying on them all the time. He liked Rush Limbaugh. He disliked the A.C.L.U. But he also disapproved of the way some of the local farmers treated their men, and he included his own brother in that category. He pointed out that the chicken shed was a chicken shed no longer, and that he provided the workers there with power and running water, and that when they remembered to remind him he replenished their gas, so they could have hot showers as well. He thought he treated them fairly.

The men in the chicken shed didn't exactly disagree. They said the farmer was tough and explosive, but if they went about their work correctly he left them alone. They knew about living

FRECKLED DAZZLER

Julianne Moore—who has just received an Oscar nomination for her role as a maternal porn star in "Boogie Nights"—moved to Los Angeles only three years ago, but she has spent much of the past decade revitalizing Southern California types: the sardonic night-club singer in "Cast a Deadly Spell," the combative wife in "Short Cuts," the allergy-ridden hausfrau in "Safe." In the Coen brothers' "The Big Lebowski," which opens on March 6th, she plays the kooky artistic daughter of a Pasadena millionaire, and appears in one scene as a Wagnerian bowling goddess. André Gregory, who directed Moore in "Uncle Vanya," described her as a "shape-changer." Even her eyes seem to change with each incarnation.

Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe

AMERICA

A tawny and lead-gray current of swift river
To which a man and a woman come, leading a yoke of oxen,
To found a city and to plant in the middle of it a tree.
Under this tree I used to sit at midday
And look at the low bank on the other side:
There, a marsh, rushes, a pond overgrown with duckweed
Shone as before, when the two, of unknown name, were alive.
I did not expect it would fall to me: the river, the city,
Here, nowhere else, the bench and the tree.

—CZESLAW MILOSZ

(Translated, from the Polish, by the author and Robert Hass.)

conditions at neighboring places, which were dark and brutishly cold. They had found this farm through their friends, and had been coming here for years. The advantage of the job was the relative security it offered—an approximate assurance that there would be work on most days, and that without a warrant or the farmer's permission the Border Patrol could not come onto the property and take the workers away. This farmer had mixed emotions about illegal immigrants and wanted those in the cities to be rounded up, but he did not like the Border Patrol, and for thirty years he had kept its agents off his land. So the chicken shed, however leaky its roof, was in the most important sense a good shelter.

I asked the men about the financial details of the job. They said that they made the minimum wage, but that after deductions for taxes and Social Security it amounted to less than five dollars an hour. They used phony Social Security numbers, and knew they would never see that money again. They were paid by check every two weeks, and if they did well they earned about nine thousand dollars a year, of which they might mail six thousand dollars in money orders to their families in Mexico. Sometimes they carried cash when they returned to Mexico, but hemmed into their clothes, because of shakedowns by the Mexican customs officials and the police. Within Mexico, they preferred to travel by air not merely for speed but for altitude: it allowed them to fly over all such risks of the road. I told them that I was familiar with the habit from travelling in Africa. They asked me if life in Africa was truly harder than in Mexico, and I answered that, yes, in general it seemed to be.

We got back to life in San Diego. The chicken shed had a Coke machine outside and a television somewhere. The men slept on wooden bunks in tangles of coats and blankets, and did their cooking on two old gas stoves. Every day, a *lonchero* drove up in an aluminum-sided catering truck to sell hot drinks and groceries, and a few clothes—and also, quietly, perhaps beer, penicillin, and marijuana. *Loncheros* gain exclusive rights to farm encampments. The term, which derives from "lunch," understates their importance to the besieged workers: by delivering the necessities (which include check-cashing and loans) to places like the chicken shed, they allow the squatters the choice of remaining within the boundaries of their refuge for weeks at a time. Later, when I talked to the farmer's wife, she expressed confusion at the men's allegiance to their *lonchero*. She had offered to do their grocery shopping for them at a store called Smart & Final, and they had refused. But, of course, grocery shopping was all she would have done for them, and they knew it.

To the men in the shed, the Border Patrol's Gatekeeper operation felt like a storm outside. One night during my stay, a man arrived after five days of crossing the border on foot. He had joined a guided group that intended to skirt the defenses by taking a bus thirty miles east from Tijuana. The group crossed the border, but within a few miles it was surprised by a roving team of Border Patrol agents. The man ran, and during the following nights he made his way north, navigating by the lights of airline flights. It hadn't always been so hard. One of his friends in the shed said, "You can tell they're looking for different ways to keep people down." I disagreed, saying, "I think they're looking for ways to keep people out." But that was an argument about intent.

The fear outside the farm was palpable. One night, I went up a dirt road into a canyon where prostitutes gather every Monday to provide the workers with sex. Because the farmers don't want prostitutes on their land, the men are forced to emerge into the open. That night, about thirty men had taken the risk. The prostitutes were Mexicans, and worked in shifts arranged by age, starting with the oldest, who were perhaps in their mid-twenties. The women carried cardboard to lie on, and transacted their business quickly in the darkness—fifteen dollars for the basic, twenty-five without a condom. A *lonchero* had arrived to sell beer and music tapes, but it was a bad party. The canyon had been raided the night before, and the men were extremely nervous, startled by every flicker of light or unexpected footstep on gravel. "*Aguas!*" they kept hissing, which means "Look out!"

Back at the chicken shed, the squatters acknowledged the relief they felt upon returning to their refuge. I told them about Jesús Ruíz and the day laborers of Los Olvidados—people who had found no such shelter. They knew all about that kind of life. They told me about migrants who had lived nearby in a clay cave beside the Pala River until one rainy day the cave collapsed and killed them. The story was about gradations. There are two kinds of squatters in San Diego. The farmworkers did not feel privileged to live in a chicken shed, but they were glad not to have been buried alive.

JESÚS RUÍZ and the other Zapotecs of Los Olvidados call themselves gardeners, because they mow lawns, dig dirt, haul branches, sweep patios, and endlessly pick up after dogs. They take other jobs as well, such as painting, fence-building, cement-laying, and house-moving. The trick, they said, is to claim expertise always, and to negotiate the wage in advance. The customers pay in cash, and usually treat the men neutrally, sometimes giving them lunch but at other times trying to talk them into accepting less than the minimum wage.

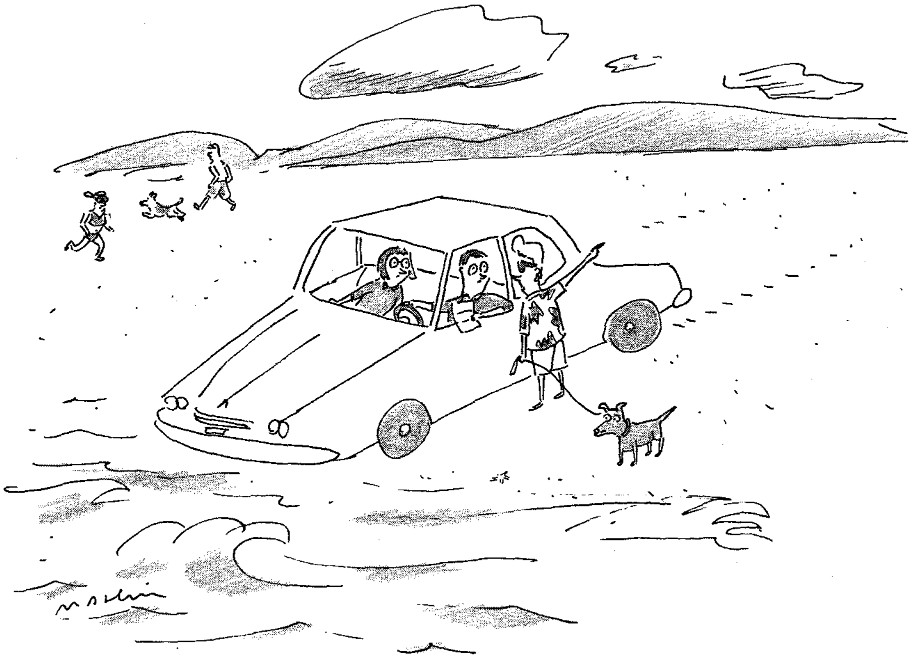
The men have different reactions to this. One eighteen-year-old told me in aggrieved tones that he knew his rights, and that, by the way, if he was ever injured on the job he would immediately retain a lawyer. But it is rare for a customer not to pay at all. And there are good customers, too—those who hire the men on a regular basis, pay them six or seven dollars an hour, and get to know their names. In one of the most expensive neighborhoods, a beautiful Italian woman hires the Zapotecs only to send them scurrying around her house all day, never allowing them to finish any one job. That suits them fine, because scurrying doesn't involve heavy lifting.

The Zapotecs know how their customers live—in big, clean houses with elaborate equipment and plenty of money. This interested me, because of the contrast with their own lives. I did not pretend that daily existence for the Zapotecs was an unending misery. I saw that they drank and danced and played cards late into the night. They went to town, learned the bus routes, found women, fell in love, hung out on the beach, and, in two cases, took up surfing. On Sunday mornings, some, like Jesús Ruíz, attended church. Even so, the contrast between their poverty and the wealth around them was something that none of them could have ignored. I thought it might have raised questions about the nature of fate. Short of that, I thought it might have raised political questions. The squatters in the chicken shed were happy to ponder such matters. But with the Zapotecs of Los Olvidados I was never able even to broach the subject. The closest I got was while walking with Jesús up a trail in the ravine one night. I pointed to a well-lit house nearby, and asked him, "Why do you think it is that they can live this way?" Jesús gave me a blank look, and answered, "Because the husband and wife both work."

In an ultra-bright Vons supermarket that stands above the ravine, the Zapotecs pass like ghosts through the aisles. It is strange to watch them shopping there—these short, solitary Indians, in dark and dirty clothes, moving silently past the mountains of abundance, selecting dried beans, rice, oil, tortillas, salt, then waiting in line, paying, and slipping out the door. The comfortable Californians in the store seem not even to see them—but then the Zapotecs seem not to see the Californians, either. When they leave the store, they walk in single file down the narrow trails into the ravine, moving with the aboriginal sureness of Indians carrying white plastic grocery bags past living-room windows. At night, the city's glow illuminates their way. One immigrant said to me of his new life here, "It is a like a dream, but I do not wake up." Los Olvidados is a ravine in San Diego, but the Zapotecs who live there seem to inhabit a parallel world.

That world is roamed by the Border Patrol. The supermarket is one of the few safe havens—a place where the agents do not chase the Zapotecs, for fear of upsetting their fellow-shoppers. The agents wait instead for them to come outside. In the parking lot, on the streets, in expensive new developments, the roundups proceed practically unnoticed. Some of the homeowners have only vaguely heard of the Border Patrol. Down in the ravine, however, the Zapotecs have taken precautions against surprise attack, stringing trip wires through the bushes, camouflaging their roofs, and cutting hidden emergency exits into the backs of their shacks. These things help, especially at night. But every morning the Zapotecs have to leave the ravine and expose themselves to capture while walking or biking to work. When the Border Patrol approaches, the men do not bolt but continue to move brazenly up the street in the hope that the agents will pass them by. This takes steady nerves. One man told me that he could not control his fear and, as a result, kept getting grabbed and deported. Of course, if you run too late the results are the same. And some of the agents are fast. "They exercise all the time," that man said. "And they are big." The youngest Zapotecs are agile. They leap from their bicycles, jump the developments' gates, cut through back yards, and scramble up hillsides. But for the older men, the quick escapes are harder to pull off. In the brush, they double back. As a last resort, they simply crouch and freeze and allow the agents to go crashing by. It is a mystery to them why this sometimes works.

Crouch and freeze—it's a desperate strategy for people inhabiting a clay cave in a storm. You could wish for these Zapotecs that they would move on now, join the immigrant stream, find some old chicken shed to take shelter in. But they don't. Some will return to live permanently in Mexico; they are the ones who go there most frequently, and keep their wives and children in Santa Ana Yareni, and still participate in the traditional system of communal obligations

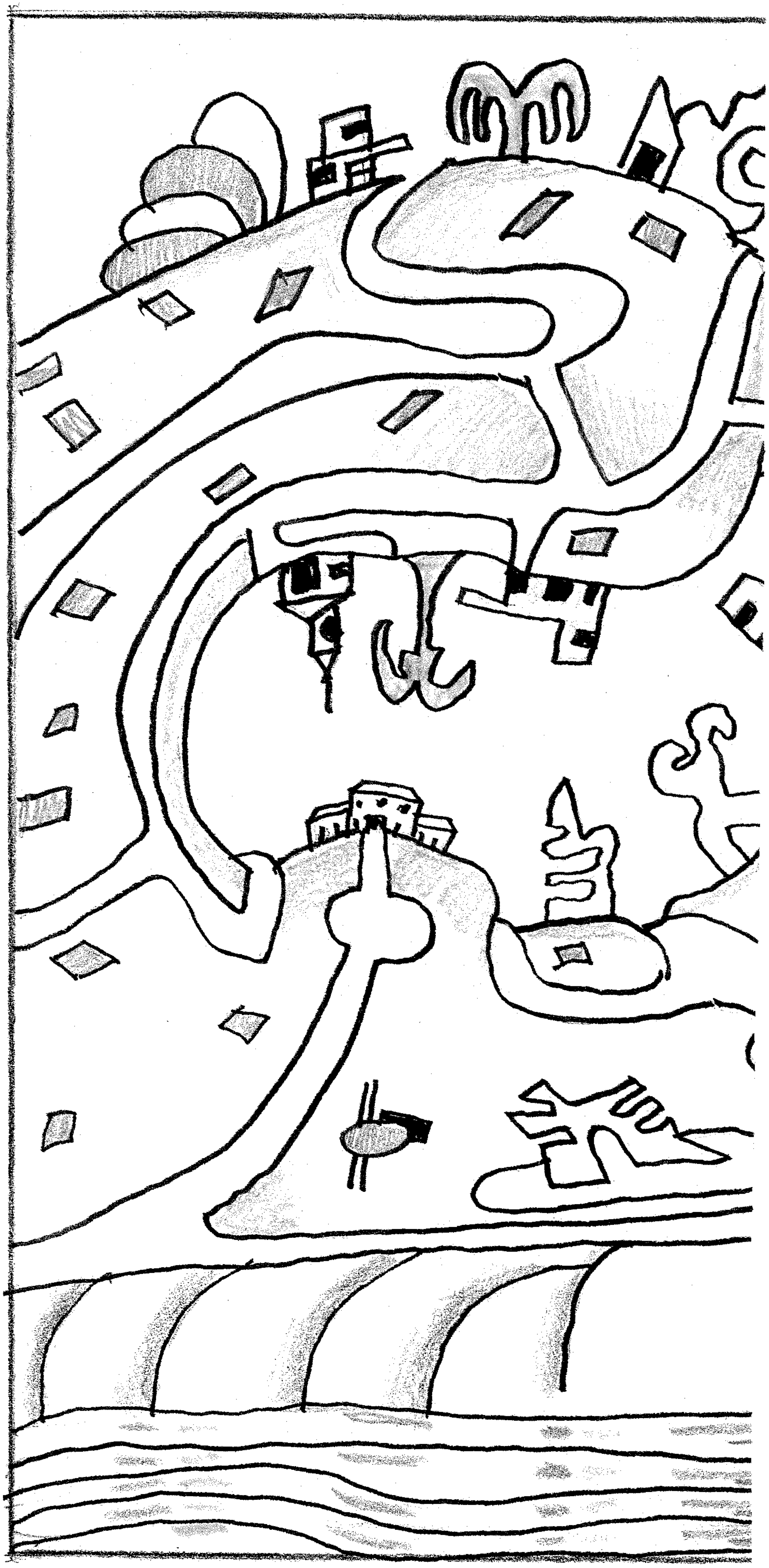


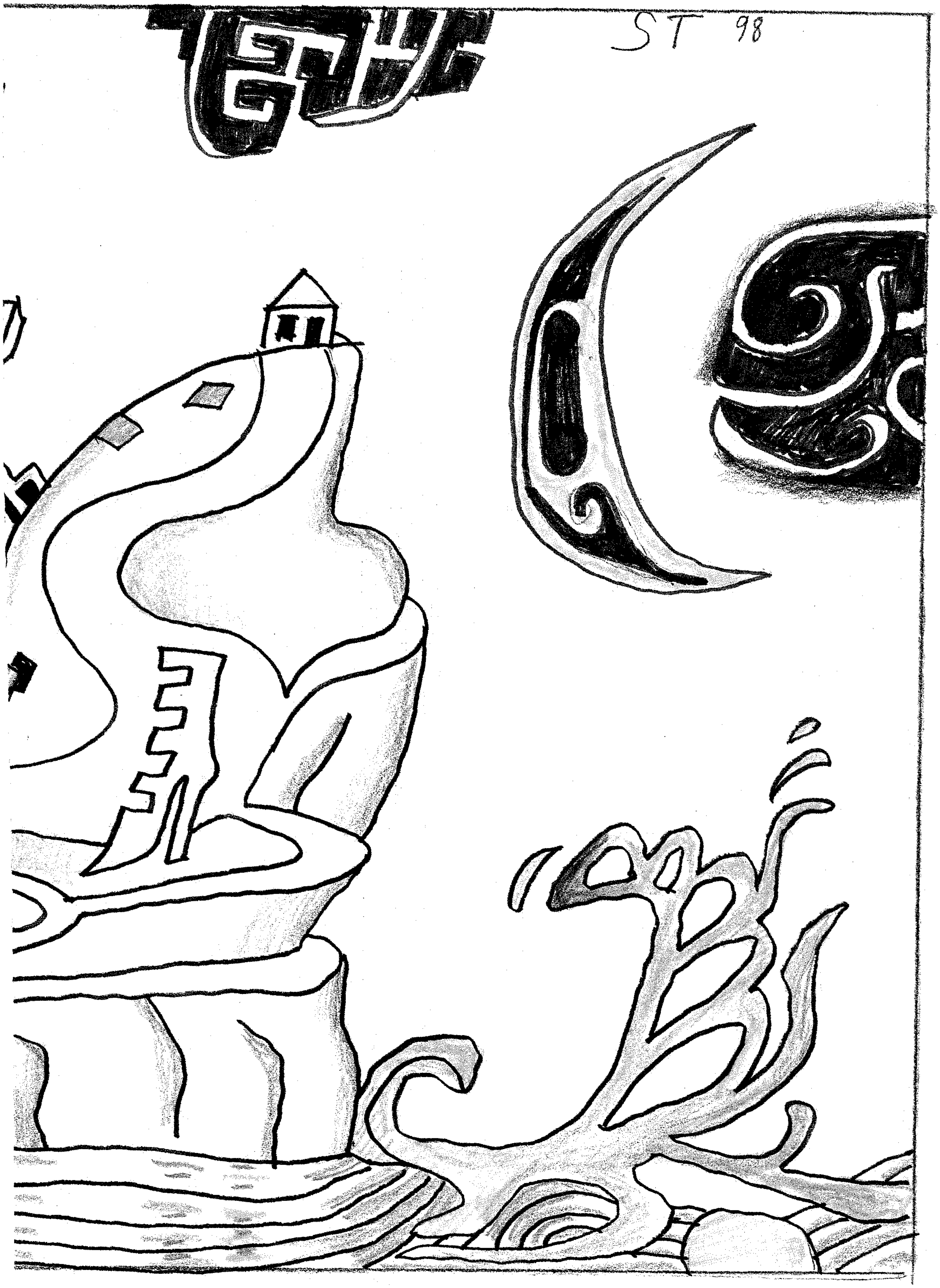
"O.K., this is the West Coast, O.K.? What you want is the East Coast, so turn around and go back twenty-four, twenty-five hundred miles, and that's the East Coast. You can't miss it."

there. But others in Los Olvidados will probably never really go back to Mexico—and Jesús Ruíz is one of them. This realization came to me slowly. The reason he had nothing left in Santa Ana Yareni was that he had abandoned his obligations there, and so was no longer welcomed. His dream of Mexico City would not work for him, either; in practice he had no idea how it could. A future in the United States would be difficult, too. His life here was so marginal that he hardly existed. He was unlikely ever to gain the right to stay. And yet he had no retreat. For that reason alone, he was slowly becoming an American.

He was last caught some months ago along a stretch of road known as La Puerta, where every morning the day laborers wait for drivers to stop and give them work. For obvious reasons, any such collecting point becomes a focus of Border Patrol pressure. But La Puerta backs onto miles of rolling scrubland, and it offers additional escapes up large drainage pipes, into which the agents will not proceed beyond the point of radio contact. Jesús should not have been caught. He was not exactly careless but was jostling for work and didn't notice the agents until it was pointless to run. He was detained for several days, photographed, fingerprinted, and computerized, given a "voluntary return" to sign, warned about prison time if he came north again, and, finally, taken to Tijuana. He whiled away the afternoon, settled on a five-hundred-dollar no-frills border-crossing package, and, early that night, trotted back right through the strongest Gatekeeper defenses. For another two hundred dollars, his guide would have thrown in the ride fifty miles north to Los Olvidados, but Jesús has a family to feed, so he walked.

When I asked, he did not deny that the need for professional guidance has made such crossings increasingly expensive, but, as always, he did not complain, and he remarked that at least the crossings are faster now. I think he was missing the point. The suggestion that border defenses might stop such people is pabulum for the press. The real effect is to make their lives still more difficult. Jesús had heard on the radio that Clinton was promising to put an additional two hundred agents in the area. I asked if it worried him, and he politely said no. But I think it probably should have. ◆




ST 98

FICTION

NACHMAN BURNING

A haircut in Santa Monica.

BY LEONARD MICHAELS

NACHMAN HAD the blues. Maybe it was the weather, cold and gray, unusual for Santa Monica; or maybe it was a change in Nachman's body chemistry, or maybe it was a psychological problem, a conundrum below consciousness. Maybe it was just being over fifty, or the fact that he needed a haircut. Two months since the last one. Nachman telephoned Felicity Trang.

She said, "Felicity Hair Salon."

Said Nachman, "I want to make an appointment."

"We have free time at noon. O.K.? Which girl you want?"

"I want Felicity."

"O.K. What name?"

"Nachman."

"Oh, Dr. Nachman. How nice."

"Not 'Doctor.' Nachman is good enough. I'll see you at noon, Felicity."

"Yes. Thank you, Not Doctor, ha-ha-ha."

Felicity's laughter, excessive yet pleasing, continued to stir in Nachman after he put down the phone. He felt better already. He imagined himself tipped back in the chair, surrendering his head, a hairy bundle of complexities, to Felicity's ministrations.

There were other ways of dealing with low spirits, but Nachman wouldn't take drugs and rarely exercised. He'd told himself more than once that Felicity cost less, for the same amount of time, than a psychiatrist. She compared well with any doctor. A haircut was a visible, tangible result, and Nachman would feel reborn. Hair grew back, but psychological problems also returned. In essence, nobody changed. Don't think that way, he told himself, teetering at the edge of a mental hole. Walk briskly. He was almost there, and looked forward to the shampoo. To Nachman, it was worth the price of the whole haircut.

Then would come the skull massage. Before the haircut itself, before she picked up her comb and scissors, Felicity always stood beside his chair, her shoulder pressed gently to his. Together they looked at Nachman's face in the mirror, and Felicity asked how Nachman would like her to cut his hair. Her voice was sweetly deferential, her expression rapt with concern to please. Nachman always said the same thing, slightly choked by self-consciousness:

"Not too short."

"This long you like?" she responded, always touching the top of his ear, and ever so lightly fingering it.

"Yes, about right there."

"Layered?"

"Yes. Small scissors. No electric clippers."

"Oh, no. No machines. Only small scissors and comb. Comb O.K.? Ha-ha."

Nachman felt gooseflesh along his arms, and then a general surge of pleasure, like a mass of troops racing across a field, overwhelming its enemy, anxiety, vanquishing it. The battle of such emotions, thought Nachman, is what a man feels when he is about to get married. In short, approximately every two months, Nachman married Felicity Trang for about forty-five minutes.

Nachman opened the door and entered the barbershop. Four Vietnamese women barbers were at work. Felicity was free, sitting at the cash register near the door. She smiled at Nachman and stood right up. He followed her to a chair, sat down, and abandoned himself to the ritual, becoming oblivious of everyone in the barbershop except Felicity and himself. He imagined their marriage, mediated by his hair, as heavenly, an eternal condition, though he knew, when Felicity fashioned the ultimate shape of his hair with a comb and a blow-dryer, the marriage was over. He also knew he wouldn't look good. She was a terrible barber. The haircut "styled" by her would look as if it had been inflicted, and it would bring to mind images of poor laboring men, or hicks.

So?

It looked honest enough, and the point cannot be made too strongly that Nachman loved the feeling of Felicity's hands soaping his hair, then massaging his skull behind the ears, and, with a subtle circular movement, his occipital bump. She knew how to touch a man. As for the actual haircut, it would have been wise to call in a different barber, or anybody passing in the street, but even so, when Felicity stepped back and tilted her head as she studied the progress of her work, Nachman saw that she considered herself a first-class barber and his heart went out—no, it rushed out—to her. He would never say a word that might suggest reservations or criticism.

TO know the consequences of an action is one thing. To eschew the action is another. Who would smoke cigarettes if this weren't true, let alone have casual sex, thought Nachman somewhat irrelevantly—Nachman who, despite his susceptibility to women, was a strict observer of limits. He didn't fool around. For forty-five minutes every two months—you couldn't call it fooling around—Nachman was in no danger of compromising himself. A haircut was inconsequential, erotic, not sexual. Thus tumbled the thoughts of a serious being. By pleasure deranged, maybe, but no longer depressed.

Near the end, Felicity would say, "You like O.K.?"

Nachman would say, "Perfect." He would sound drowsy.

Later, he always tipped generously and smiled, saying, "Thank you," and walked giddily home, supposing that his head might now look appropriate on a pedestal in his garden, with a grin on his lips, expressing blissful indifference to the fluttering doves and jays, alight-

FILIP PAGOWSKI

ing and asquat, shitting on his haircut. But where else, for twenty-two dollars (four for the shampoo, thirteen for the haircut, and a five-dollar tip), could Nachman get such relief from low spirits, such uncomplicated satisfaction? He'd have paid more.

Felicity, a small woman about forty years old, had a complexion slightly ruined by acne and a figure slightly ruined by childbearing. Color photographs of her three children—two boys and a girl—were taped to the mirror. Nachman always asked about them. Felicity told him they spoke Vietnamese as well as English. Lowering her voice to a whisper, as if she feared the evil ear, she said her children were excellent students—they were first in their respective classes. She also talked about her husband, who refused to let her invite friends to dinner, or attend night school to study English, or drive the family car. She walked when she went shopping. And walking to work took over an hour. In Los Angeles it was impossible for her to visit people without a car. The few women she knew at the church, to which she walked once a week, lived too far away. Felicity said, "I hope someday I have more friends."

Nachman wondered if Felicity hoped he would be her friend. Probably not, but the idea embarrassed him. He felt a touch of anxiety. The haircut was friendship enough. Felicity lived in a different world. She went to church, unimaginable for Nachman. They could probably never have much to say to each other. A few questions, a few answers. Felicity once asked what kind of work Nachman did. He told her he was a professor of mathematics. She once asked if he was married. He told her he was not married. Today she asked if he lived alone. He told her he lived alone. This was the furthest they had got conversationally, and Nachman didn't expect or want them to achieve a higher level of generalization, or a deeper level of intimacy.

"No girlfriend?" Felicity said, as if the idea took her breath away.

"No."

Did she have someone in mind for him? Nachman continued to wonder what her gasp could mean, but, at the moment, Felicity's small scissors, working about his ears, pleased him to the point of stupefaction, and he enjoyed the ripping sensation as she pulled the comb through lengths of wet hair caught between her middle and index fingers before she snipped and snip-snipped, and, in the shallow depths of a semi-sleep, he liked the way she then released it with studious and insensitive attention to its layers, mutilating it. Nachman felt no annoyance or despair, only the musical nature of the occasion. In the sound and pull of the comb drawn through his hair came the rich tones of a cello pulling against the flight and flash of scissoring violins, and, spinning high and away in thought, Nachman wished he had a ton of hair so this fine delirium could last longer than forty-five minutes. Hair, he thought, is basic to erotic connections between a man and a woman, usually the woman's hair, and, and, and—what follows? Nachman didn't know, but he pursued the thought—no, the thought pursued Nachman—as he felt a pressure against his elbow, which rested on the arm of the barber chair.

Felicity was no more than five feet four, if that tall. Her arms weren't long. She had to lean with her whole torso as she moved about the chair. Her pelvis brushed against Nachman's elbows, on either side of the chair. Merely inevitable given Felicity's build, thought Nachman, but thinking about it he wondered if there weren't a suggestion in her pelvis as she said, "My husband never talks to me. He comes home late. Tired. Never talks."

Nachman's heartbeat could be detected pulsing in the cloth that lay across his chest, and he felt himself hardening. He assumed Felicity meant that she had something in common with him: Nachman had no girl, and Felicity had no man to talk to.

"Never talks?" said Nachman.

"Not touched me for many months."

Nachman's pleasure, which had been diffuse, felt suddenly concentrated. He felt a rush of energy, a strong disposition to act. Nachman to the first power was becoming Nachman to the second, an entirely different creature, a stranger to himself, the agent of a potentiality. His hand jerked spasmodically and seized Felicity's upper thigh, just below her crotch.

Hardly breaking the rhythm of her work, she twisted her hip to the side and Nachman's hand fell away. She'd experienced this before, apparently, and knew how to deal with it. She didn't even interrupt her work. Nachman sat in the chair, rigid, vibrant, pulsing, burning with the unconsummated violence that had taken his hand, and burning with shame. In the mirror he and Felicity were all that he could see. The other chairs and customers and women didn't exist.

Felicity said, "I could meet a friend sometimes, maybe."

"Yes."

"A man who would be gentle."

Her voice was so soft that Nachman hardly felt the reproach. He almost imagined that she was hinting, encouraging him to entertain a romantic supposition.

Soon the haircut was finished, and Felicity stood beside the chair as she had at the beginning, intently looking at Nachman's head in the mirror.

"O.K.? Not too short?" she said cheerily.

Nachman said, "Perfect."

He followed her to the cash register, his hand in his pants pocket feeling for bills. He felt a stick of gum, too, and pulled it out, nervously unwrapping it, and beginning to chew it as he counted two tens and a five. She had appealed for a friend, and Nachman had groped her. Money might make things worse, but he dropped the bills on the counter beside the cash register, and, as Felicity started to give him his change, he said, "No, keep it," and he looked at her with the face of a man chewing gum—somewhat cool, somewhat moronic—but Nachman didn't know how to look at her, or what to do or say. His eyes were silent beggars.

Felicity said, "Oh, ha-ha. I like gum, too."

She understood what he felt. Nachman realized she was trying to connect, trying to make him feel all right. Instantly, he searched his pockets for another stick of gum. He found none. Felicity's smile saddened and became an ironical little pout, and she opened her eyes wide and shook her head no, no, as if sympathizing with a child, and then said, "Ha-ha-ha," a high and utterly artificial laugh, but with such good will that Nachman laughed, too, and they laughed together as Nachman said goodbye, leaving the barbershop with a sense that he'd been forgiven. ♦

Ann Warner, Lili Damita, the wife of Errol Flynn, Marlene Dietrich, and Jack Warner in 1948. Opposite: Harry Warner with
"Harry had this idea that the Warner family should avoid scandal, so when Jack came to him and said, 'I want to marry Ann,'

ANNALS OF HOLLYWOOD

WEST OF EDEN

The rise and fall of Jack L. Warner's paradise.

BY JEAN STEIN

ife, Rea, after the 1935 Academy Awards.
ent bananas," Betty Warner Sheinbaum says.

Raised by Polish-immigrant parents in the late eighteen-hundreds, in Baltimore, Maryland, London, Ontario, and Youngstown, Ohio, the Warner brothers—Harry, Sam, Albert, and Jack—founded their first official studio in Hollywood in 1918, and in 1923 they created Warner Bros. Pictures, with Harry as president, Jack and Sam as vice-presidents in charge of production, and Albert as treasurer. By the early nineteen-forties, Warner Bros., which had become known for introducing sound to film (with "The Jazz Singer") and for producing movies with a greater social awareness than those of its main competitor, M-G-M, owned seventeen thousand movie houses in seventy-five hundred towns. The studio's roster of actors soon included James Cagney, Bette Davis, Humphrey Bogart, Errol Flynn, and James Dean, and its list of films such classics as "Casablanca," "The Big Sleep," "Rebel Without a Cause," and "A Streetcar Named Desire." During this time, Jack and his second wife, Ann Warner, also became legendary members of the Hollywood social aristocracy. Although Jack and Harry Warner managed to make their studio one of the most successful in Hollywood, they had serious disagreements about its management and became increasingly estranged. In 1956, two years before Harry's death, Jack negotiated a buyout in which he maneuvered Harry out of the studio and replaced him as president. In 1966, Jack sold his interest in Warner Bros. to Seven Arts Production, for thirty-two million dollars. The following interviews about the Warner family have been excerpted and edited from a work in progress.

THE WAX MUSEUM OF DREAMLAND

DAVID GEFFEN (*interviewed 1991*): One time, a friend and I were driving past Jack Warner's house on Angelo Drive. We noticed that the gates were open and we actually drove in, but guards showed up and stopped us from looking at the house. When I read Ann Warner's obituary in the Hollywood *Reporter*, in March, 1990, I thought, I'll say I want to buy the house just to get a look at it. This time, I was ushered in. It was so grand and so Hollywood. It was a bigger statement than Louis B. Mayer. It was a bigger statement than David O. Selznick. It was the biggest statement that any of the figures of that era had made. It was an homage to an idea about the way people lived in Hollywood. I got caught up in the whole gestalt and I bought it.

BARBARA WARNER HOWARD (*interviewed 1986-98*): Our house was originally built in a Spanish style, but my mother hated it. My father had lived there with his first wife, and Mother was always after him, saying, "Let me just change a few things," but he kept saying no. Then one day Father came home and found that she had arranged

BOTH: UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN

through someone at the studio to have a bulldozer tear down the façade of the house. Anything that looked Spanish was gone. So he finally let her redesign the whole front. She was very taken with Monticello and went to study it before they built. With some help from the Hollywood decorator Billy Haines, the house became the Southern antebellum mansion of her dreams.

There were big wrought-iron gates at the street entrance and there was always a guard from the studio posted by them. You'd come up the driveway, under a canopy of sycamore trees that were illuminated at night by soft hidden lights, then around a graceful fountain in the brick courtyard. Then you'd pass through a pair of mahogany doors into an entrance hall that had a curved staircase, a large crystal chandelier, and a Versailles parquet floor which Mother had found in France. Downstairs, there was a theatre with a massive screen that rose out of the floor and, in the next room, a bar with a pale oak counter and leather wall panels. The dining room on the ground floor had Regency chairs and an English dining table that could seat twenty-four. And there was a ladies' room, where the women would go while the men smoked their cigars after dinner, which had a pink-veined marble floor and Venetian blackamoors. In the pantry, there was an old-fashioned telephone switchboard that only the butler could work. Upstairs were my parents' quarters, complete with steam room, and my little bedroom and sitting room, which were done in deep pink—to this day I've hated pink—and lots of chintz. I'd never been particularly attached to the house—I'd always wanted to get out. To this day, I don't completely understand my feelings about it.

Only about ten days after my mother died, an executor for the estate said, "I have someone who might be interested in the house." It was David Geffen. He came over a few days later, dressed in jeans and a T-shirt and a nice jacket: he looked like someone you would meet at a beach party. He could have been a friend of mine. I thought it would be nice to sell it to someone in the entertainment business, and my mother might have liked him, though my father would have disapproved. But David said, "I could never live here. What would I do in a place like this?"

Then he came back again. This time, he said he thought he was very interested. My father had a brother named David who had died of sleeping sickness shortly after the First World War, and I said, "David, that's wonderful. Maybe you're the fifth brother come back." He looked at me as if this had clinched the deal.

He showed the house to friends: Steven Spielberg and so forth. In the office, there was a collection of original leather-bound scripts embossed with "From the Library of Ann and Jack Warner." Spielberg saw one that dated from around the time he'd first come to Hollywood: "Rebel Without a Cause" or "East of Eden." And he said, "Do you think I could touch it?" David asked if he could give it to Spielberg. He hadn't bought the house yet, but he took me so much by surprise that I replied, "Of course, go ahead." They were like children in a candy store. And I felt the mystique for the first time. Here were people I respected who were enthralled. It was a very odd feeling, as if I were living in a wax museum.

CAST

Harry Joe (Coco) Brown, Jr. (b. 1935), *a childhood friend of Barbara Warner Howard's.*

Patrick Foulk (b. 1910), *a close friend of Ann Warner's.*

David Geffen (b. 1943), *entertainment mogul.*

Richard Gully (b. 1907), *Jack Warner's social adviser.*

Dennis Hopper (b. 1936), *film actor and director.*

Cy Howard (1915-93), *the third husband of Barbara Warner Howard.*

Jean Howard (b. 1911), *a close friend of Ann Warner's.*

Barbara Warner Howard (b. 1934), *the daughter of Jack and Ann Warner.*

Jan Ival (b. 1926), *Ann Warner's butler and chauffeur.*

Gregory Orr (b. 1954), *the son of Joy Orr and the grandson of Ann Warner and her first husband, Don Page.*

Joy Orr (b. 1924), *the daughter of Ann Warner and Don Page.*

Jackie Park (b. 1933), *a mistress of Jack Warner's.*

Larraine Rosner (birth date unknown), *Louis Rosner's wife.*

Louis Rosner (b. 1929), *one of Jack Warner's doctors.*

Betty Warner Sheinbaum (b. 1920), *the daughter of Harry and Rea Warner.*

Jack Warner, Jr. (1916-95), *the son of Jack Warner and his first wife, Irma Solomon.*

Escrow on the house closed just six weeks after Mother's death. It was so fast, but David kept saying, "Why can't this go faster?" He wouldn't take no for an answer. He wanted it now and yesterday.

Cy Howard (*interviewed 1991*): After David bought the house, Barbara and I went to the cocktail party the lawyers gave there. David and I greeted each other, and he said, "What is a Brooklyn boy doing here?" I said, "You don't always have to be from Brooklyn. You'll enjoy yourself. You can afford it. You'll have a new persona." He said, "You know how Brooklyn is: we sit on the stoop, all huddled together, friendly. How can I make this friendly?" I said, "David, you can make this Brooklyn. You open up two candy stores, and you bring in five Hasidic rabbis and three Koreans to picket. You bring in cops to beat everybody up. Then, for the climax—this might be expensive, but I think it should be done—you build an El, so that you can sit there shivering as the train goes overhead. Then you'll have Brooklyn." Barbara grabbed me and hustled me away and I wasn't allowed to speak anymore.

BEYOND EINSTEIN

Betty Warner Sheinbaum (*interviewed 1990-98*): My grandmother Pearl Warner was a childbearing machine: she had twelve children, seven of whom survived. She wore a long black silk dress every day, and she had no interests that I knew of. My grandfather wanted to have a new life in the New World, but, at the same time, he was not equipped to do anything other than what he had done in the Old World. He was a butcher, then a cobbler.

My father, Harry, had virtually no education. He was the oldest son, and from age twelve he was the patriarch of the family. Jack was the youngest son. He was cute and funny and he wanted to be in show business: he was a pest from the day he was born. Sam—the brother in between—kept peace in the family because everybody loved him.

Once the brothers had founded the studio in L.A., Harry went back to New York to work on distribution with Albert and to deal with the banks—he was one of the few Jewish entrepreneurs the bankers trusted in that era. Sam and Jack were left to establish the business, although Harry had to approve whatever they did. Somehow or other they all worked well together. Then Sam died of a cerebral hemorrhage (after an operation to relieve a sinus infection), the day before the opening of "The Jazz Singer," in 1927. He had been responsible for bringing sound to the movies—with another man who worked at Warner Bros., an Army engineer who was a genius with electronics called Major Nathan Levinson.

JACK WARNER, JR. (*interviewed 1993*): My father took the name of a minstrel he liked—Leonard—as his middle name. And he wasn't really Jack, he was Jacob, and the last name wasn't Warner. I asked him once, "What was the real family name?" and he said, "Jack, get me a cigarette." Then he let the smoke curl up, and he looked at me and said, "I don't remember."

I started working in my father's production department when I was still in college. I'd ride a bicycle around the lot and look for problems. I once wrote a fifteen-page critique and gave it to him and to Steve Trilling, his right-hand man at the time. Then the phone rings, and my father says, "Who did you give this to? Find all the copies and destroy them." I'd found fault with certain things that delayed pictures—nothing earth-shattering, too much dependence on committees and so on. I guess I was showing off a little, and he resented it. He never went past fourth grade, so he wanted me to have a great education, but then once I got it he'd say, "You and your college talk . . ." I always felt, what the hell, he's a cum laude in his field, he doesn't have to feel negative about it. But he did have a great inferiority complex.

When Albert Einstein visited the studio in 1931, my father—who would speak up to anyone even when he didn't know what he was talking about—said, "Doctor, you have your theory of relativity and I have mine: Never hire a relative." I always wanted to add, "Where would you be, Pop, if your brothers hadn't hired you?"

They took Einstein to the process department, where they had a Ford set up on a scaffolding. He and Mrs. Einstein sat in it and the cameramen filmed them while, unbeknownst to the Einsteins, projecting an aerial film of New York, Niagara Falls, Chicago, and Los Angeles behind them. Then they developed this film of the Einsteins flying over America in a Ford and showed it. Einstein stared at it and kept saying in German, "My God, what have they done? I don't understand." My father said, "*Relativity* he understands!"

Jackie Park with Jack in 1965: "He knew how to live when his demons weren't coming out."

The Warner brothers: Sam, Harry, Jack, and Albert in 1925.

Barbara Warner with her father in 1950: "My father had a rabid fear of anything Communist."

THE ASTROLOGY LESSON

JACK WARNER, JR.: My father was married to my mother, Irma, for twenty years. In the early years of their marriage, when he was struggling to move up in the movie industry and his big job was to get the actors out in the morning and be sure the cameraman wasn't drunk, my father was a happy guy. The brothers were not yet such wealthy men, and many of their later problems hadn't developed.

He built the house on Angelo Drive while he was still with my mother. It was designed and dressed by the studio art department, and there was one feature in the house that I've always been sorry about: it had a central-heating system with big vents, so that if my parents had a battle at the other end of the house because she'd found out that he wasn't at the studio that night I'd hear the whole damn thing coming through the vent. A successful producer in that early period was the worst marriage risk in the world: there were so goddam many temptations, and my father was exposed to them willingly and happily.

One day he sent his masseur, Abdul, over to pick up all his clothes and then he disappeared from our lives for a year. My mother knew he'd had affairs—Ann wasn't the first—but she hadn't known he wanted a divorce. And suddenly she and I had to pack and leave. Part of my parents' divorce agreement was, strangely, that neither of them could remarry for one year. As soon as the year was up, my father and Ann got married in upstate New York. We found out because the newspapers reported on it and it was all over town. My mother was very upset because she hadn't yet adjusted to being divorced. She'd been Mrs. Jack Warner and had lived in a

FROM TOP: COLLECTION OF JACQUELINE PARK, BISON ARCHIVES, COLLECTION OF BARBARA WARNER HOWARD

mansion, and suddenly she was living in the Beverly Wilshire Hotel.

I was still working at the studio every summer, and there was no real friction between me and my father at that point. He kept saying, "I want you to get to know Ann." All I knew was that she had broken up our home, and it took a while to get my mother to let me meet her. "That woman" and "that bitch" were interchangeable terms in our house.

Then the first time I met Ann she said, "When were you born?" I gave her the date, and she said, "What time?" I said, "My mother says it was at eight in the evening." My father said, "Yeah, that's right, you broke up a movie I was looking at." Ann said right away, "You and I will never get along. My sign is in conflict with yours." I've heard from other people who knew her that she was ruled by astrology. My father looked a little surprised, but what could he say? You'd better recheck your stars?

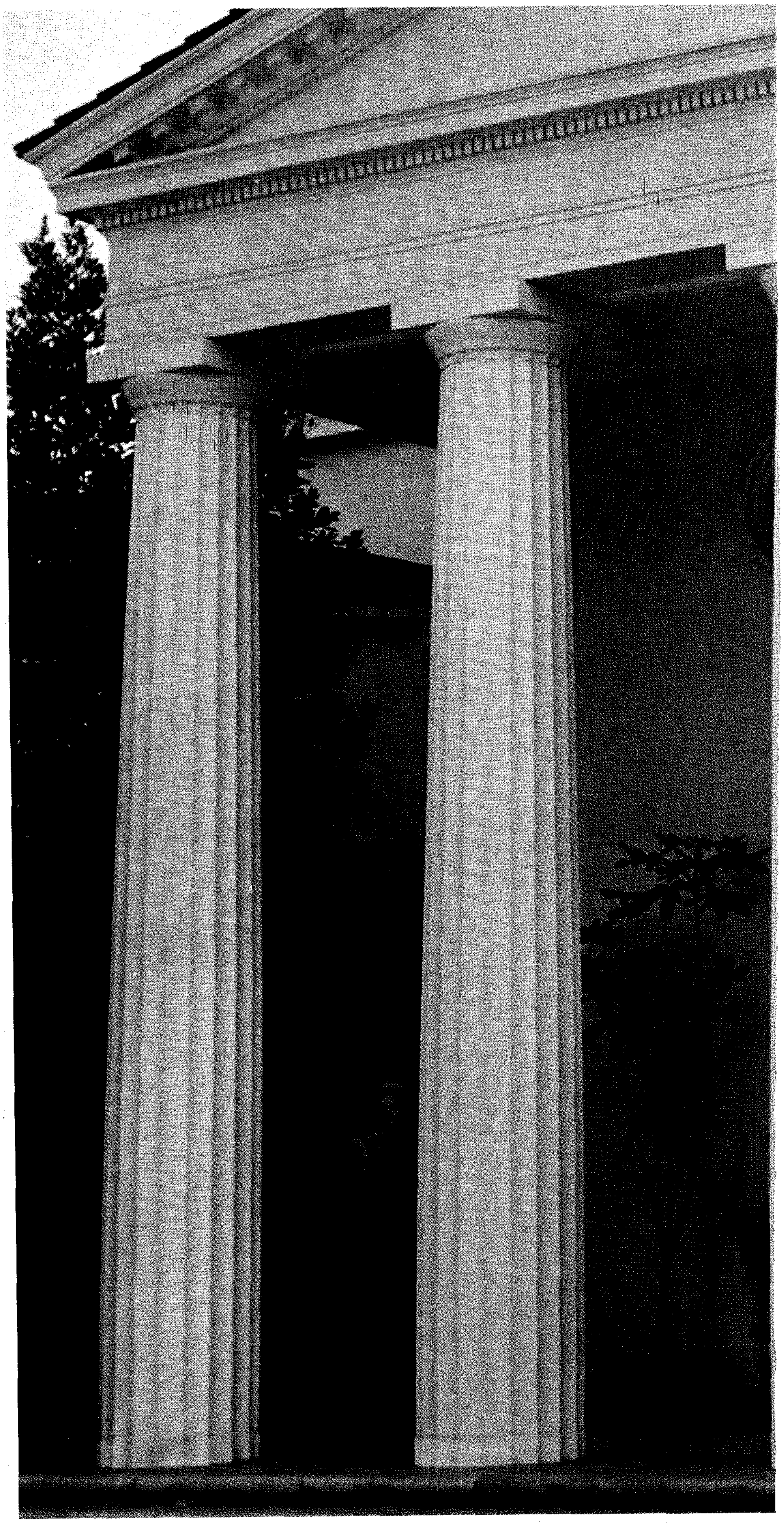
YOU SHOULD BE IN FILMS

Betty Warner Sheinbaum: We moved back to California in 1936—largely so that my father could keep an eye on Jack. My dad bought a thousand acres in the San Fernando Valley and built a ranch there. But after a few years he decided to sell it to the studio. They were using part of it for location shots anyway. Jack said, "Look, can you give the studio a break?" So my dad said, "Sure, you can have it for ten thousand dollars." About a year later, he found out that Jack had bought it for himself and turned it into a housing development. I guess he made money on it, but he had no hesitation about lying to my dad.

My dad lived well, but it wasn't important whom he saw socially. He didn't like actors' parties, and he never really connected the faces to the names. There's a story about him going to the Coconut Grove and noticing a beautiful teen-ager at the next table. Before anyone could stop him, he went over and said, "Young lady, you're really beautiful. You should be in films." She said, "Well, how do you do, Mr. Warner. I'm Shirley Temple."

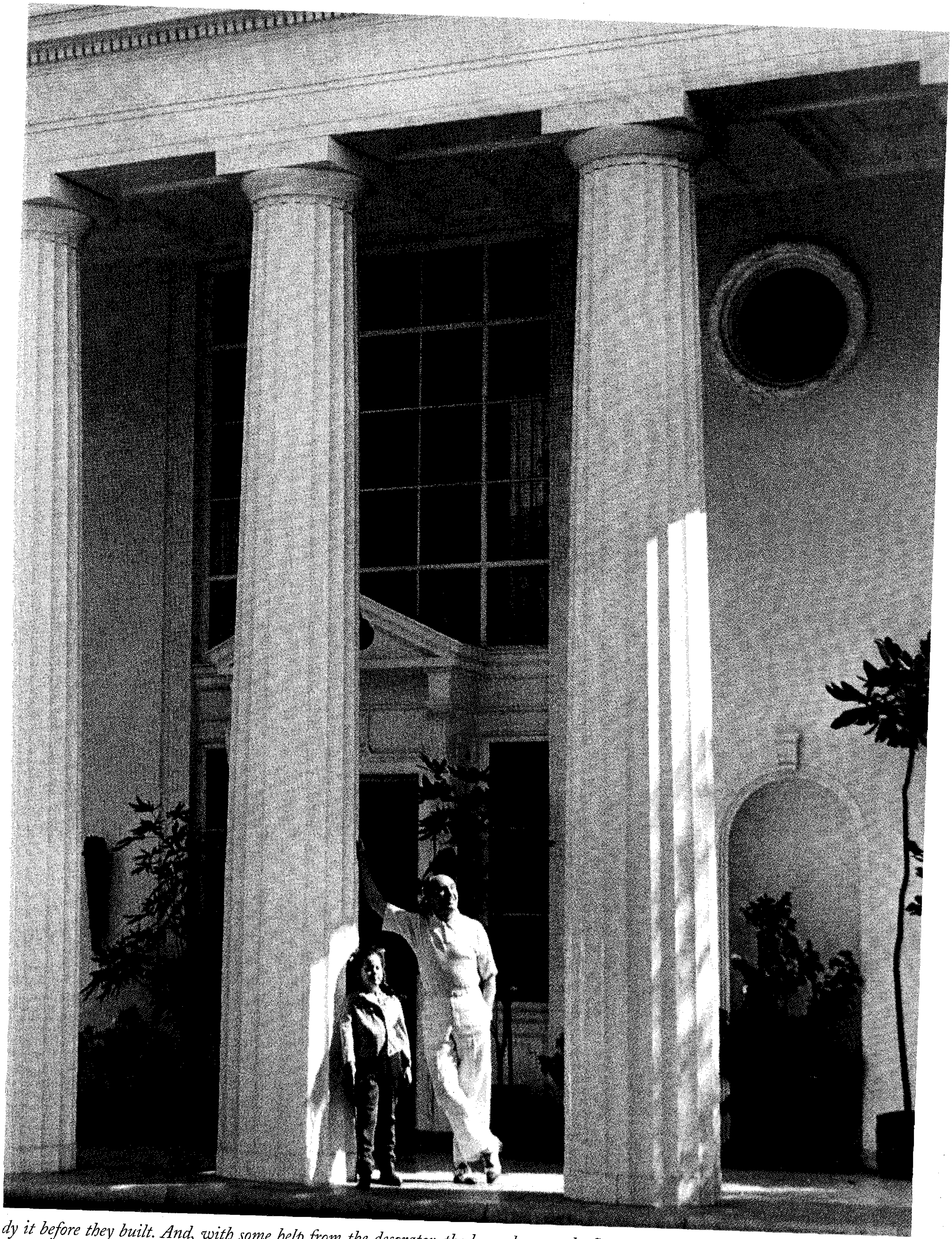
HARRY AND JACK WARNER

Betty Warner Sheinbaum: My father took care of the family, and if anybody had a problem they came to him. But



COLLECTION OF BARBARA WARNER HOWARD

Barbara with her father in 1942: "My mother was very taken with Monticello and went



dy it before they built. And, with some help from the decorator, the house became the Southern antebellum mansion of her dreams."

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he was also very domineering. It was "Do it my way or else." He knew what was right and what was wrong, and he expected everybody to live up to his code. Jack was constantly rebelling, and everything he did was just shocking to my father. He treated Jack as if he were a bad little boy, and they were constantly at odds. It wasn't that their relationship deteriorated—it was just always bad. My grandfather Benjamin Warner, whom the brothers had moved to Beverly Hills with my grandmother, tried to keep peace in the family: "One for all and all for one" was his credo. But Jack and Harry came from two different planets.

My father had this unrealistic idea that the Warners should always be dignified and avoid scandal. So when Jack came to him and said, "I want to marry this girl, and she's been married, and we have an illegitimate child," and so on, my father went bananas. He said, "Absolutely not. How dare you marry a woman like this?" Ann was not exactly a nice Jewish girl.

ANN WARNER AND HER LOVE CHILD

GREGORY ORR (*interviewed 1996*): My grandmother Ann Warner was born in Ferriday, Louisiana, where her father had run a drygoods store, and he also had a movie theatre for a while in the silent-movie days. Then they moved out to California when Ann was twelve.

She met her first husband, the actor Don Page (later Don Alvarado), when she was sixteen and he was twenty-one. She was finishing high school, trying to figure out what to do, when this very good-looking young actor came along, and he was her ticket out into the exciting life of young Hollywood. But he didn't do well when sound came in. My grandmother and Jack Warner started having an affair in the early thirties, and she got divorced from Don pretty quickly then.

BARBARA WARNER HOWARD: My father first saw my mother when she was dancing the tango at the Coconut Grove. She was very beautiful—she looked like Dolores Del Rio—with amazing blue-green eyes and a great sense of rhythm. She loved to dance. And she had an incredible presence, great charm and wit. But they didn't actually meet until later because she was married to her first husband then.

My parents got married in 1936. Years later, when I was about thirty-seven, I met Mae Brussell, the daughter of Rabbi Magnin, who had been the chief rabbi of Los Angeles. She said, "Barbara, the last time I saw you, you were three and it was your adoption party. At least that's what everyone was told, but I said to my father in a rather loud voice that I could tell you were Jack and Ann's daughter because you looked so much like them. And he told me to shut up."

I tried to find out what had happened. I spoke to my father's secretary and a cousin of my mother's, and they both told me that I had been born before my parents were married so they had had to hide me. I was shunted off to the gatehouse at the edge of our property, where I lived with a close friend of my mother's, and then when I was two and a half I was "adopted" and moved into the house.

I didn't ask Mother about it then. But, about a year later, the night after my father died, I slept over in my mother's room, so she wouldn't be alone. In the middle of the night she forgot I was there and pushed the button to make the automatic bed sit up and woke me up. I thought that was probably a good time to ask about this story. Mother was very touched. She said, "Oh, you should have asked me before. You were a love child. We really wanted you."

GROWING UP IN DREAMLAND

JOY ORR (*interviewed 1996*): I was Ann's first child, and we were alone together a lot. Before she met Mr. Warner, I was all she had, and she was all I had. We used to have picnics together at Laguna Beach. She was so young and adventurous. I was in love with her. But, of course, she changed. She became a lady of the world.

I first met Mr. Warner when he came with my mother to visit me at the Sacred Heart Academy in L.A., and I loved him on first sight, even though he had a gruff manner. I didn't know anything about him, but I thought, If you make my mother happy, I'll kiss you. I was attracted to him. He was a big polar bear. Then, when I came home, I thought, If I stay out of sight I won't get in trouble. But I had this love for him. I used to wait at the gate for him. Then he started taking me to tennis and polo matches. Still, I never called him "Father" or "Daddy." Finally, when he was passing away, I was just over sixty, and he said, "I am your father, am I not?" And I said, "Yes!" I had always been afraid to say it, but he was sitting there almost blind, and I said for the first time, "I love you." And he said, "We love you, too, baby." Whatever people say about him otherwise, Mr. Warner was a wonderful father. He could have walked away from a lot of things, and he didn't.

Of course, I knew that Barbara wasn't really adopted. One Sunday afternoon, my mother showed me a picture of a little girl and asked, "Would you like a sister?" The minute I saw the picture, I knew she was my mother's daughter. So I said, "She has to come home right this minute. This is where she belongs."

Life in that house was a fairyland at times. We were protected; we knew nothing of the outside world. I remember looking out my window and seeing all the way down to Benedict Canyon—nothing but trees blowing in the wind. My room was in the upstairs corner of the house, and later, when I was grown up, I'd go back and sit in the dark and pretend no one knew I was there. I wanted to stay there until I left the earth. But my mother would say, "We have to stop this. You have to grow up."

In 1942, when I was seventeen, I went into Mother and Mr. Warner's sitting room to get the funny papers or whatever was around to read, and he handed me a script to look at. I read it and I thought, Oh, it's kind of cheap, but I don't want to say anything, because I don't want to be on the outs. So I said, "Yeah, it's O.K." Then he said they wanted to test me for it. It was "Casablanca." When I first read it, it was just "Everybody Comes to Rick's," and it sounded kind of corny. It turned out, because of Ingrid Bergman, I guess, to be something unique. Bergman couldn't be cheap, no matter what she did. My scene was done in half a day and Bogart directed it.

RICHARD GULLY (*interviewed 1987–1998*): When I arrived in Hollywood in 1936—before I started working as Jack Warner's adviser—the three social figures were Jack, Darryl Zanuck, and Sam Goldwyn. They were the inner circle. Jack Warner completely outclassed Louis B. Mayer. Mayer had no social prestige, but at the same time he had the most fabulous roster of stars: Garbo, Joan Crawford, Myrna Loy, all the glamour people. Warners was a more intellectual studio. We had brilliant writers and the greatest musical staff in the world—Selznick had to borrow Max Steiner from Jack Warner to score "Gone with the Wind"—but we couldn't compete where the stars were concerned. Jack took it all in stride. He borrowed people, and he could always get John Wayne or Cary Grant, because they didn't want to be affiliated with one studio. Jack would have friends like Gary Cooper and Greer Garson at the house, but he very rarely invited Warner Bros. stars over. There were so many disputes with them—they were always on suspension. Bette Davis, for instance, was a real problem. She sued Jack and was disruptive in every way.

HARRY JOE (COCO) BROWN, JR. (*interviewed 1984*): All the players of that generation of the thirties—Louis B. Mayer, Jack Warner, Darryl Zanuck—were people who came with a burst of energy from nowhere and founded a business nobody had heard of before.

Barbara Warner was my age, and we lived in a world of governesses and nannies. It was a society within a society. Now, because we're second-generation Californians, we're looked down on as the old aristocrats. But when our parents arrived, there was no tradition. When I think of that generation, I think of a style that's gone: a style that went with large houses and invisible children and gaiety of some sort. The rest of the country was in a depression, but in Hollywood after 1930 everybody was rich.

The Warners were always the mythic family. You had normal, run-of-the-mill people, and then you had the Warners. Their gardens were like something out

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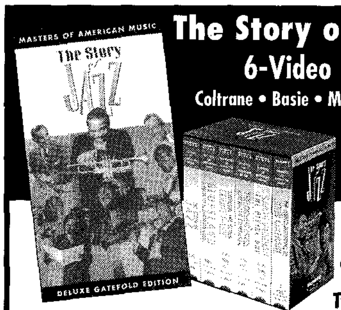

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of Versailles, and the projection room was extraordinary. After dinner, there would always be movies, and everybody would joke about them if they weren't Warner Bros. movies. All the up-and-coming actors would have to come over and make an appearance. It was just feudal, that kind of power.

BARBARA WARNER HOWARD: When I was a child, there was still quite a bit of wilderness in the garden. The property was fourteen acres, and it had not yet been bricked over and bordered up and down. I used to go for walks with my father after dinner. He always carried a flashlight and a big cane with a rubber end to it, not because he limped but because he used it to kill snails. He hated snails. Another time he had a gun, a .22, and he shot a rabbit. He said it had been eating the lettuce and carrots in our victory garden. I was very disappointed in my father. It took me a long time to trust him again.

During the war, our bomb shelter was behind the projection room. It must have had at least twelve bunk beds, because you couldn't let the servants die—they were hard to find during the war. My father was terribly patriotic, and he was a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force.

Then there was some labor unrest at the studio in the forties, and a note was sent to my family threatening to scatter our bones all over our golf course; a map was enclosed to show where the different pieces would be buried. After that, I always looked at the golf course differently, wondering exactly where which parts would be. Children have a certain cruel streak.

As a young girl, I'd go to all the sneak previews with my father. They were always held halfway out of town and you could never tell anyone where they were going to take place. Climbing into those black cars, we were like gangsters going to rob a bank. We'd usually stop at a steak house for dinner, where everyone would eat the same thing because we were always late—usually a shrimp cocktail and a steak. And my father would have one drink, a Jack Daniel's, I think. If it was really ultra secret, he'd drive himself. When we'd stop at a gas station on the way he'd tell the attendants, "You have to go and see . . ." and of course he'd name a Warner Bros. movie.

Almost every night my father would bring the dailies home. The editor, the director, and my father's secretary would be there. One night when I was eleven, they were running "San Antonio," which was a Western with Errol Flynn. I saw it two nights in a row, and the second night I noticed that the cattle were stampeding left to right instead of right to left—the two sections of film didn't match. I said, "Daddy, they're going the wrong way!" "Please be quiet, Barbara. We're trying to concentrate. . . . But the kid's right!" Two months later, I was sent to Switzerland. They must have had the idea of sending me away before, but my outspokenness clinched it.

ANN WARNER WOULD COME AND GO

HARRY JOE (COCO) BROWN, JR.: Ann Warner was sort of mysterious; she would come and go. She was always off in another wing, it seemed. She and Jack Warner had a very torrid love affair that ended in marriage. I think he once even shut the gates so she couldn't get back in, and she was banging on them—like a scene out of "Dallas."

JEAN HOWARD (*interviewed 1987-98*): I think I was Ann's closest friend. She certainly was mine. She was a simple woman, and she was very shy, actually, especially when Jack was around. I think she was madly in love with him when she married him, and she was very happy for maybe five years before she even thought of anybody else. Ann was emotional, but she was a brilliant woman, in her way. She didn't really like to go to lunch. She didn't play cards. She didn't have much in common with the other women, because they hadn't read the books she liked—Robinson Jeffers and other poets. She also read up on the occult, which I didn't really want to know about.

At some point in the early forties, Jack caught Ann with a Warner Bros. actor. She was really stuck on him—he was bright, unlike most Hollywood people in those days. Ann had rented a little house up in the Hollywood hills, and one day Jack walked in on her there with him. Ann put herself in the hospital and called me, weeping. And then slowly they made up. The actor was blackballed at Warner Bros. and he didn't work in Hollywood for a long time. Jack had that kind of power.

There was also a rumor around town in that period that Ann and I were having a romance. When she got bored at parties, she'd get hold of me, and I'd sit down with her, because she was more amusing than anybody else there. And in the summers, after dinner at the Warners', the men would start playing cards, and the women would go swimming in the pool. There was always this wonderful Hawaiian music, white gardenias floating by, and rum drinks. Boys were mixed up with it, too: a lot of them fey or gay or whatever. Not undressed—we'd have our bathing suits on. It was all innocent fun. But it was better fun than most wives were having.

Then all this stuff blew up about Ann's affair with the actor, and a few months later Harry Warner walks into his brother's office and says, "Listen, I know how you feel, that you caught Jean and Ann in bed together." Jack Warner, bless his heart, stood up and socked his brother. "You son of a bitch! You don't know what you're talking about." There was always such drama in this town.

BARBARA WARNER HOWARD: In the early forties, Mother wrote to Salvador Dali in New York to ask him to do her portrait. He wrote back that a portrait with detail in the background would be seven thousand dollars; without detail, it would be five thousand. My father circled the "five." The painting of my mother took several months. She and Dali became such good friends that he threw in the details anyway. I believe it was one of his favorite portraits, but I found it a little bit spooky. She's wearing her cabochon emerald brooch and a hat with feathers that look like snakes—Medusa.

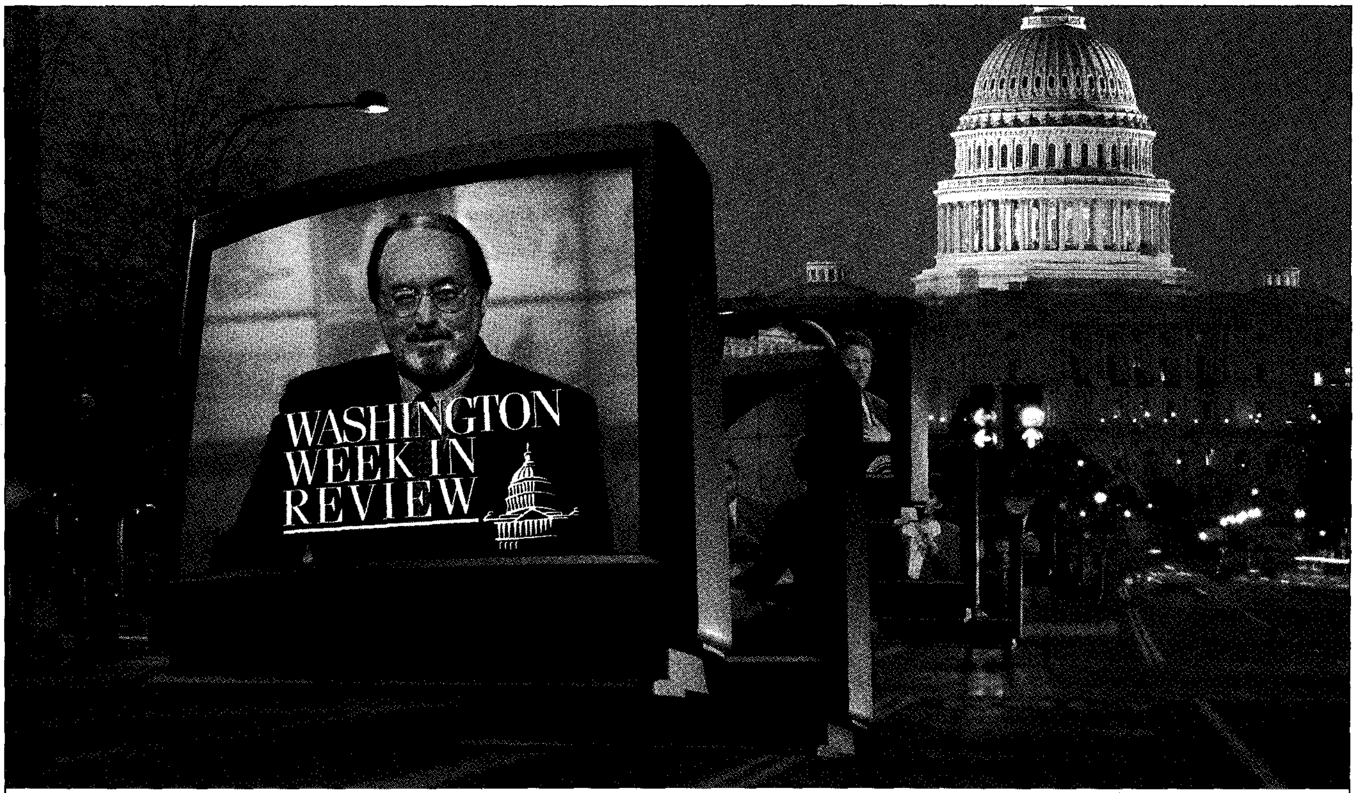
I was six or seven at the time, and I was much darker than I am now. While Dali was staying with us, whenever I came into the room he'd say, "Here's the little prune."

JEAN HOWARD: Dali was somebody you liked to watch because he was like a marionette jumping on a stick. For some reason he always painted rich women. Like Mona Harrison Williams, the Countess of Bismarck: in the painting, she's beautifully dressed, but he painted her barefoot, like the country girl she had been.

In Ann's portrait, the house is shown crumbling. She hated to see that. Oddly enough, she never realized that it would eventually crumble, that it was just a material thing. We all said the picture was terrific, and she kept it because she realized it represented something important. But I know in her heart she thought maybe someday she'd get Dali to redo it.

THE COMMUNISTS

BARBARA WARNER HOWARD: I was sent to a boarding school in Geneva called the International School. When my father found out the name, he pulled me out because he was convinced it was a Communist school. It wasn't at all—it was a school with diplomats' children—but my father had a rabid fear of anything or anyone Communist. He la-



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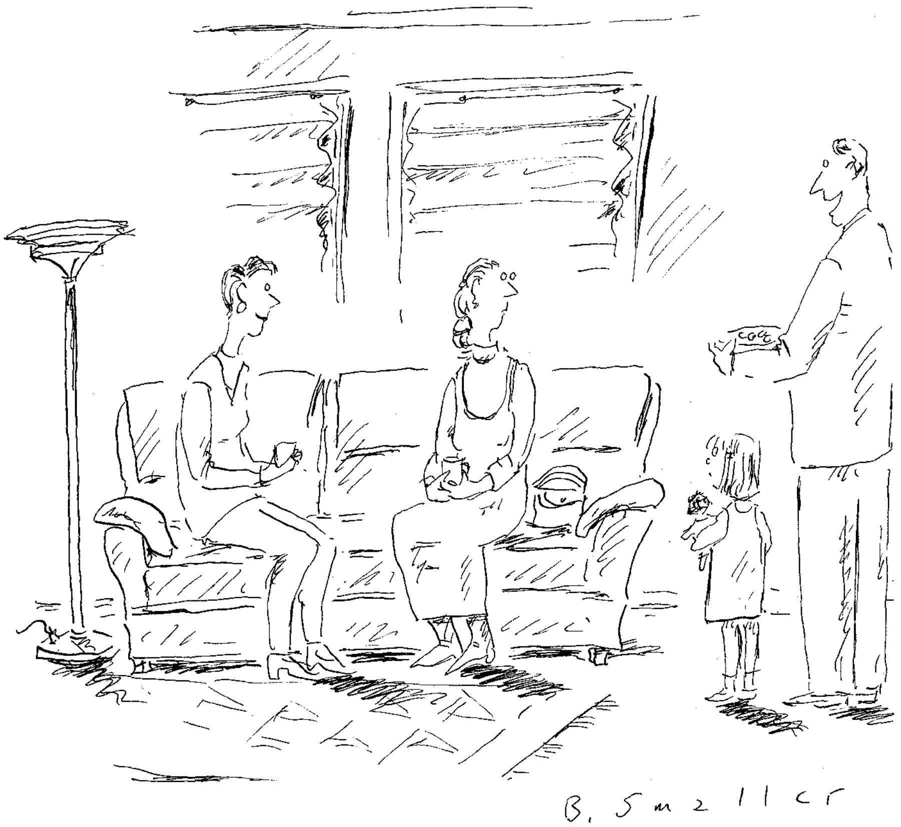

"I was raised in New York and Nancy is from L.A., but we're bringing up the children bicoastal."

• •

belled them Commies, Reds, or "moody Russians."

I continued to live in Europe for more than twenty years, and I heard about blacklisting, of course, but I didn't realize how tragic it was. The first time I felt it directly was in New York in the mid-seventies. I was at the photographer Milton Greene's house, and he was showing old videotapes of "*Life* Goes to the Movies." Suddenly my father was on the screen, before the House Un-American Activities Committee, saying that he and his brothers would send all the Communists back to Russia and would happily subscribe to a pest-removal fund to get rid of those termites. I had never seen this videotape, and I was terribly embarrassed. Depriving people of their livelihood in that way was the worst thing my father could have done.

JACK WARNER, JR.: My father more or less volunteered to testify. I think someone got to him and said, "They're going to jump all over Warner Bros. for making 'Mission to Moscow' and 'Action in the North Atlantic,'" which were pictures that portrayed Russia—our ally at the time—in a friendly light. So he went to Washington with a prepared speech, but he got nervous and fell apart. You could see the sweat running off his face. The cameras and the lights were on him, and he knew he was making a fool of himself. He volunteered names—some of which he retracted at a later hearing. We walked out together afterward with a couple of our lawyers, and he said to me, "I didn't do good, did I? I shouldn't have given names. I was a schmuck." I was tempted to say, "Yes, you were," but I didn't. He was taken for one hell of a ride.

It was so easy to look back and say, "We shouldn't have made those movies." But Warners led the way in that kind of gutsy, visceral picture. They made "Confessions of a Nazi Spy," which was almost prematurely anti-Fascist, and had to close up all their offices in Nazi-occupied areas. Their head of distribution in Germany was murdered on the street. And this was before we had even entered the war. You

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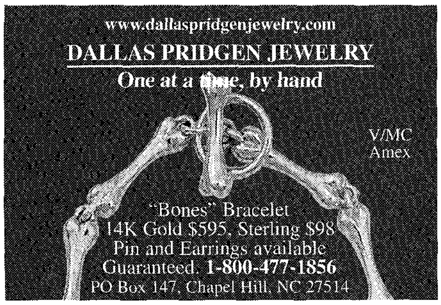

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would never have seen Louis B. Mayer making "Confessions of a Nazi Spy." He was making "Grand Hotel" and frothy things like that. Warners made "Mission to Moscow" because Franklin D. Roosevelt had called my father into the Oval Office and said, "Our allies the Russians think we hate them. We're doing all we can, but can you make a picture that will show them in a light the American people will be friendly toward?"

I SHOULD NEVER HAVE GONE BACK

BETTY WARNER SHEINBAUM: The first time Jack fired Jack, Jr., from Warner Bros., it was really instigated by Ann. She felt that Jackie was more loyal to his mother than he was to her—which, of course, he was. It also had to do with the fact that the Warner family didn't accept her—she married into a family which had predetermined that it wasn't going to like her, and she vowed vengeance. Jack, Jr., just got caught in the middle of everything. He was the kindest person you could possibly meet. And he always wanted his father's approval. At one point, Jack, Sr., came to him pleading for money, claiming that his divorce from Irma had left him in financial trouble. So, without any hesitation, Jackie gave him back the million dollars that had been put in trust for him. Jack, Sr., took it and ran.

JACK WARNER, JR.: When my father had me fired, the cops who were ordered to throw me off the lot were crushed. But they had to do it, and I said to them, "O.K., fellas, you're following your orders, now let me buy you some coffee," and I took them to the drugstore across the street. Then I went to several fine attorneys, and they all said the same thing: "Sure, you've got a case, but are you prepared to spend the next ten years and all the money you've got?" But the real thing was why would I sue? For what? Hurt feelings? A father has the right to fire his son, even if he has no real strong, honest reasons. What you do is pick up your shattered pieces and get going with something else. Then later Harry got to my father and said, "It's either you or your son." So my father said, "All right, bring him back."

I should never have gone back, because my father hadn't really changed. He was still married to Ann, and hers was the last voice he heard every night. She hated the idea of two Jack Warners in the world. I would say that my father deserved better, but that's not true. He was a tremendous failure where it counts. Human relationships: zero. He wanted to be loved, and yet he did so much that was unlovable.

Interestingly enough, throughout my father's life he would not personally fire anybody. God help you if you left the room he was in, though. Nobody would leave the executive dining room at Warners before my father, because they knew that he would start throwing barbs and jokes about them and demeaning them in front of everyone. And then, when Harry came to lunch, first the phone would ring and Harry's secretary would tell the headwaiter, "H.M.'s on his way"—"M" was Harry's middle initial—and then the headwaiter would

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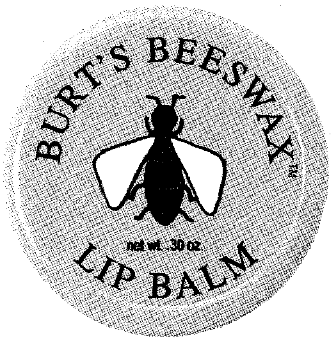

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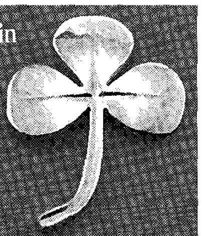

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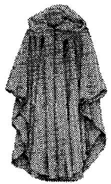

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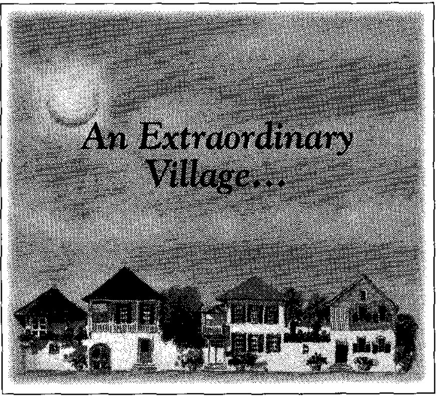
An Extraordinary Village...

tell my father, "Your brother's coming to lunch." My father would say goodbye and leave before Harry got there. They timed it that way.

Harry took after his father, but my father—I don't know whom he took after. Today you'd call him a juvenile delinquent. What's that saying? Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely. I always think of my father when I hear that. But I can't say he was ignorant. The company didn't do what it did with an idiot at the helm. This man knew how to feel the public pulse.

THE CRACKUP

DENNIS HOPPER (*interviewed 1990*): I was very young in 1955, when Warner Bros. did "Rebel Without a Cause"—eighteen or nineteen years old. We'd started shooting in black-and-white, and two weeks into it Jack clearly saw that something was going on with James Dean. He said, "Change this picture to color. The kid's going to be a star." He'd found his new Rin Tin Tin.

Then one day, the next year, Jimmy Dean and I were coming out of the commissary on the Warner Bros. set, and Jack Warner came up to introduce the banker Serge Semenenko to Jimmy. Semenenko put out his hand to shake hands, and Jimmy reached into his pocket, threw a bunch of coins at their feet, and walked off. They looked completely stunned. I followed Jimmy like a puppy dog and said, "What the hell was that all about?" So he told me that Jack had convinced Harry that they should sell the studio, and they sold it to Semenenko; then, the day after, Jack bought back in. All he had really done was to buy his brother out. So that was Jimmy Dean's reply to what Jack had done.

BETTY WARNER SHEINBAUM: I knew that my father and Jack were getting along so badly that it was absolutely necessary that my father quit. Jack was spending six or eight months at a time gambling in the South of France—he wasn't minding the store—and it drove my father crazy. Dad was giving himself heart palpitations by going to the studio. His blood pressure was up, and the screaming and yelling were absolutely inhuman. So there was a reason to sell, and the understanding was that the brothers would go their separate ways. But Jack came back as the president of Warner Bros. He'd wanted that title, and he'd wanted to get rid of my dad. My father went crazy; it was such a betrayal. He didn't scream or yell this time: he had a terrible stroke. It was too much to bear. If you look at Hollywood now, that kind of thing happens every six months. But they had lasted, what, almost forty years?

The sad thing was that Jack didn't have friends. He had yes-men. He loved people who lived like kings. But although he sought out society, he always seemed so uneasy and defensive when he was in it.

JACK WARNER, JR.: I was supposed to go to Hawaii the day after Harry's stroke, but I cancelled the trip because they thought he might die. When I saw my father at the studio the next day, he said, "Hey, why aren't you in Hawaii?" and I said, "I couldn't leave Uncle Harry so sick." And he looked at me and said, "Why not? He's not your father." There was no answer to that.

When Harry died, in the summer of 1958, I sent a priority cable to my father in the South of France, but he never answered. It was a bitter end to the war between them. Then, a few days later, he had a terrible accident. He came out of the casino one night around 2 A.M., got in his Bentley, and started driving to his house in Cap d'Antibes. Halfway there, he must have fallen asleep, because his car drifted left and hit a coal truck head on. My father's door flew open, and he was propelled out onto the pavement. He was in a semi-coma for five or six days. His sister, Sadie, couldn't wait to get to him and say, "God punished you." She actually said it. I don't know if he threw her out or not, but he never saw her again. She died not long after that, and he wouldn't even go to her funeral.

BARBARA WARNER HOWARD: After my father's accident, everyone really felt he was dying, so they all came to France—including Jack, Jr., who wanted to see him for what he thought was going to be the last time. But when my father saw Jack walk into the hospital room he was really disturbed. He said, "I must be in worse shape than I thought, if *he* came all the way over." It gave him such a shock that he felt he had to get better.

Then Jack, Jr., gave a statement to a reporter, saying that my father was close to death, and that was really the end of their relationship. When my father got back to California, he had him fired from the studio. I don't think they ever saw each other again—Jack, Jr., probably wasn't welcome at the house.

ANN WARNER'S NEW PHASE

JEAN HOWARD: Jack and Ann used to have Sunday suppers at a long table with maybe twenty people. I remember one time—I hadn't noticed that Ann was the least bit tipsy—all of a sudden Jack, who was at the other end of the table from her, screamed down through all the guests, "Anna, put that drink down!" It was embarrassing, and even if you weren't drunk it would have made you drunk. Which it did—she fell right on her face. Very cruel. And she was a sensitive woman. What Jack Warner did to Ann destroyed her. I often saw that girl get up from the table and run out of the room crying. I didn't blame Ann for anything, not even for having a lover, which she certainly did. Jack had his own so-called sex where he wanted and when he wanted.

PATRICK FOULK (*interviewed 1994*): I met Ann Warner in New York when I was on leave from the Air Force—through a friend whose husband was a director. I took one look at her and said, "I don't believe this." That's the way she looked. Ann and I just hit it off, and after that we never looked sideways much. I've met a lot of people, but I've never seen one like her. She was Miss Mercury: she was electric. Some people felt that her magnetism was an affectation, but it wasn't. Anybody who knew her recognized how unusual she was. Even Elsa Maxwell told me, "I've met them all, and there's nobody like Ann."

Our relationship was quite strange. Hardly anyone knew about it, except for Jack. We kept it that way. Jack understood it; he endured it because he didn't want to lose her. As a matter of fact, on two occasions he offered me a writing job. I sure didn't want to work for him. Nonetheless, he and I had a kind of mutual respect, because I would not take any of that Warner balderdash from him. When I first met him, he would do anything to put Ann down. He was jealous of her, but he adored her basically. She was the only human being he trusted.

RICHARD GULLY: By 1958, Jack and Ann had grown apart. She had no interest in gambling and loathed listening to the baseball games he'd have running through dinner. The three of us would have dinner together about five nights a week at that point, but it was no party. I was the buffer, the referee, between them. It had been a great love story for years, and then Ann withdrew.

It wasn't that she didn't like people—she talked on the phone for hours. Basically it was vanity. When you've been a raving beauty and you suddenly begin to put on weight . . . She was also bored. She'd say, "I gave great parties for twenty years, and I've done enough entertaining." The world had changed, and Mrs. Warner was really one of the first people to see that.

YOU HAD RELATIONSHIPS, YOU KNOW

RICHARD GULLY: Jack was a man with a great zest for living, and he wasn't going to live alone. In 1958, he started seeing this Englishwoman and staying at her suite at the Beverly Carlton Hotel instead of going home. Mrs. Warner was staying in their apartment at the Sherry Netherland in New York, but she obviously knew he had this mistress, and she was waiting to see how serious it would get.

So one weekend Jack went through the motions, as he always did—"Oh, I miss you so much, darling. Come back soon"—hoping she wouldn't come back at all. And she said, "Oh, no, I'm getting a new dress here. I can't possibly get back until Tuesday." Then she came back, deliberately, in the middle of the night two days early, and there was no one in the house. When I arrived at the studio Monday morning, my secretary said, "A lady's been calling you, and I think it's Mrs. Warner." So I called Jack urgently at the Beverly Carlton and he said, "Pretend you're at the dentist or something. Don't talk to her until I get to the studio. And then come up to my office."

Jack didn't get to the studio until eleven o'clock. When I went in, the studio manager had an envelope full

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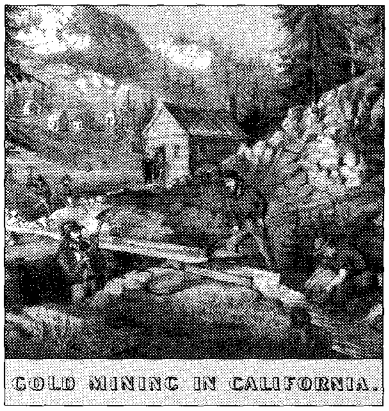

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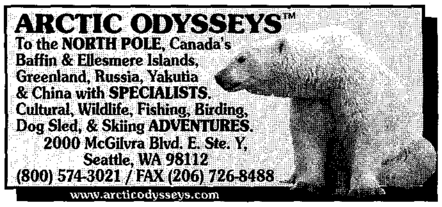

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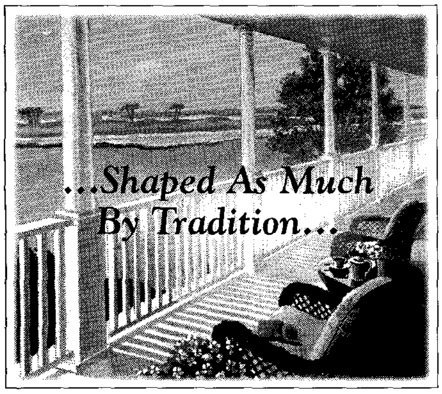


of money, and he said, "Give the girl this money, put her on a plane, and get her out of the country as quickly as possible." She put up an argument, and it took me the whole goddam day to get her out of town. By then, Mrs. Warner was livid with me for not taking her calls. She had no intention of divorcing Jack, so she held me responsible for the mistress, which was totally unfair, but she had me fired.

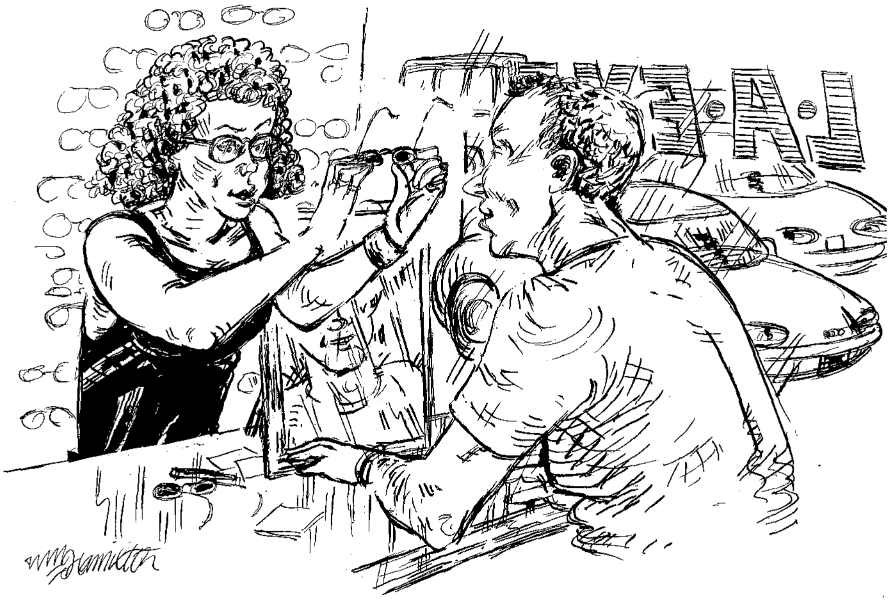
There were ten days where I was almost suicidal because I didn't know what I was going to do. I had no job, and no one was going to antagonize Jack Warner by employing me, let me tell you. I thought the end of the world had come.

JACKIE PARK *(interviewed 1996-98)*: I grew up in Philadelphia. I don't know who my father was. My mother used to have different boyfriends and then she abandoned me to the Catholic Charities. I was abused sexually, but I got a good education. We were all given different scripts when we came into the world, and the important thing is to accept that.

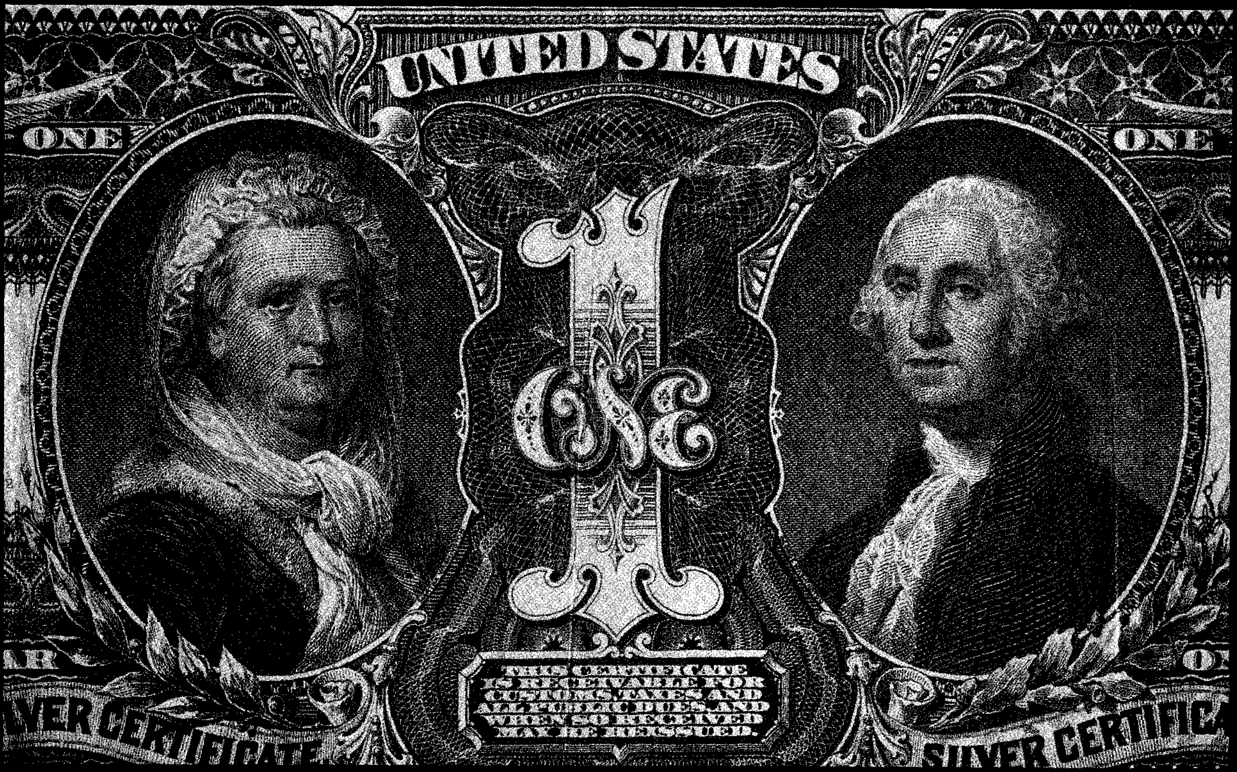
When I was sixteen, a nice gentleman took a liking to me, but when he found out my age he got frightened. So he sent me to Hollywood with some money and a letter of introduction to the director Edmund Goulding. My real name is Mary Scarborough, but when I met Edmund he said, "Let's call you Jacqueline Park, after Park Avenue." I stayed at a club for actresses called the Hollywood Studio Club. Marilyn Monroe lived there at some point, and so did Kim Novak and a lot of other starlets. I dated Ronald Reagan for three months and he never once took me out, because he was carrying a torch for Jane Wyman. And I went out with Cary Grant for a while. The first time I ever had a date with him, he was dressed up like a woman. He had on a silk blouse, velvet pants, and gold lamé shoes. You had relationships, you know. Then you met somebody else. It was like watching a movie.

When Jack Warner came along, in 1960, I was dating other people and having a good time, and Warner said, "I want you to be only with me." I told him I'd try it, and he said, "Don't fuck around with love." My bills were paid and nothing too much was expected of me. But Jack never wanted me to express myself. When I wanted to go to art class, he said, "That's a waste of time. Go work for the Red Cross." He set me up with my own apartment at the Sunset Towers and gave me an allowance of three hundred and fifty dollars a week. He was so cheap he would always make sure that the bills didn't stick together when he counted them.

But there was a side of Jack that would come out when he was not threatened by anything. He always wanted to be a singer, and one time we were sitting in a restaurant in the Valley and Stanley Holloway, from "My Fair Lady," walked



"Think of these as the car your face is driving."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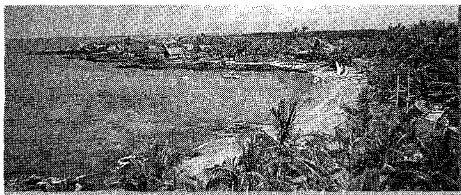

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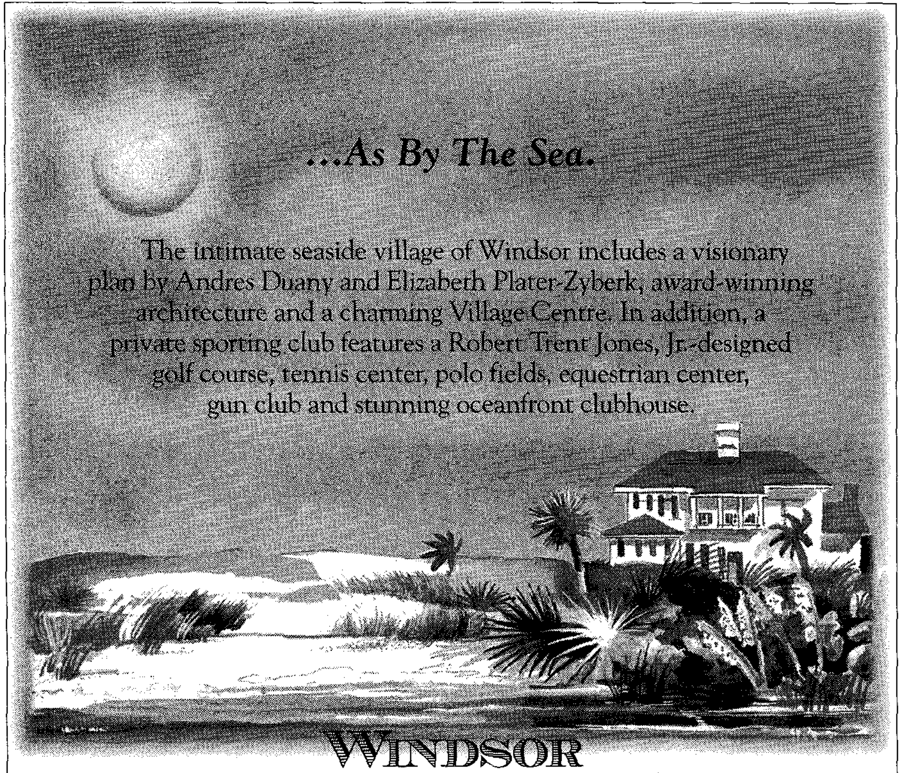

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in, and Jack started singing "Get Me to the Church on Time." He was singing louder and louder, and finally Stanley came over and said, "Jack, you will never make it." Sometimes his soul would come out, but that wasn't very often.

Then I went to the command performance of "My Fair Lady" in London with him. We didn't have to go through customs—the F.B.I. took us right through, because Hoover was his buddy. And, because my great-grandfather was from aristocracy, Jack started introducing me as Lady Scarborough. He said, "This is Lady Scarborough, and she has a heart of gold and a snatch to match." The next day, all the lords and ladies were looking for me to have tea.

Frank Sinatra said to me one day, "If this old geezer gives you a problem, call me." I put in a couple of calls at some point, but these guys with funny accents answered, "What do you want?" I said, "I have the wrong number." Then, when Frank Sinatra, Jr., was kidnapped, Jack called Frank and said, "Look, if you need a million dollars, Jackie will drive me to the studio and I'll get it from the safe." Then he turned to me and asked, "Is your car big enough to hold a million dollars?" I said, "How big is that?"

The Kennedys used to call Jack, and instead of identifying themselves—in case there was a columnist over—they'd say, "It's code K." One night in August, '62, the phone rang, and Jack and I picked it up at the same time. All I heard was, "This is code K, Marilyn is dead." Then Jack came in and said, "Did you pick up that phone?" I said, "No." The next day the story made headlines in all the papers.

One time Jack called me and said, "You know, I'm tired of all the restaurants I go to. I want to go where I'm not known." So I took him to Barney's Beanery and introduced him as George Anderson. Barney gives me that I-know-who-*he*-is look. We had dinner and the steaks were horrible. So Jack calls me up the next day and says, "I like Barney's, but could you buy the steaks and take them there?" So I bought lettuce, tomatoes, and steaks and said, "Barney, all you have to do is cook these." We went back there all the time, and Jack loved it. He'd say, "Tell Barney we're coming in." Barney would say, "Look, this isn't Chasen's, you don't need a reservation." One time a guy came over to Jack and said, "I know who you are: you're Jack Warner." He said, "No, I'm not. I'm George Anderson. I look like Jack Warner, but I wouldn't want to be that son of a bitch." That is the joy I shared with him. He knew how to live when his demons weren't coming out.

But when they did come out he just wanted to humiliate you. I never asked for anything because I knew I wasn't going to get it. See, Jack Warner could control me, but Mrs. Warner he couldn't control. I think there was a lot of guilt involved. And he was afraid of losing half of his stake in the studio if he tried to divorce her. The studio was his life—he had no other identity. He would have sold his soul to hold on to it.

When we first became lovers, I found out that he was very beaten down—he needed shots from a doctor to make him virile. So I put him under hypnotic autosuggestion and told him, "You can get it up. You can get it up," and I did a lot of nurturing. Then eventually we had a great sex life. He told me that he and Mrs. Warner hadn't had a sexual relationship in thirteen years. In fact she couldn't stand him. It was marriage in name only, but it worked. She had been his mistress for three years, so she knew what that role was.

He used to call me and say, "I am having dinner downstairs, the old hound dog is upstairs." But he also carried around pictures of her, and every girl he went out with looked like her. She was a drug for him and he was addicted.

He broke up with me in '65 or '66. Then I was in really bad shape. I was drinking, and one night I got a call from Mrs. Warner. "Jack has told me all about you," she said. "You know we wouldn't get a divorce over such a silly thing as you being his mistress. But I have to think of my husband's reputation. If you have anything planned . . . " So I sent her flowers. I said, "To Mrs. Jack Warner, the most understanding woman I know." Then Jack sent word that I should leave California. A friend of his said to me, "You don't want to wind up like Monroe, so you'd better go." Jack never saw me again. The five thousand dollars he gave me didn't last long. I lived off the money from hotel to hotel, and then I was homeless twice.

DEATH IN DREAMLAND

JEAN HOWARD: The last time I saw Jack and Ann it was Christmas, 1973. Jack was completely senile, and he was wheeled in. Ann had him dressed up for Christmas in red pajamas. She said, "This is Jean." But he didn't know me from Adam. And he didn't really know who or where he was. He was friendlier than I'd ever seen him, just waving his arms around. And Ann was very sweet with him. She put her arms around him and gave him a kiss good night when they took him out. He had no idea who she was, either.

JACKIE PARK: Right to the end, Mrs. Warner was a perfect wife. She took care of Jack. I heard that if you went in to see him you had to wear gloves and a mask. His last years were not good years. Once a friend of mine went to see him. Jack held his hand and said, "Help me."

LOUIS ROSNER (*interviewed 1995*): It was 1973 when I was called in to see Mr. Warner at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. I was in private practice as a neurologist in Beverly Hills, but Jack Warner had been to Scripps Clinic, and they hadn't been able to repair the damage from his stroke. Mainly it involved loss of visual recognition—a condition called cortical blindness, in which the person can see but can't make sense out of what he's seeing.

I was greeted by Mrs. Warner at the hospital room. Before a few weeks had passed, she knew every term on the laboratory chart. She absorbed everything you told her. She was the one who smoothed over Jack's rough edges. When he would curse, she'd say, "Jack, darling, you never talked like that. Don't talk like that in front of the doctor." She had a culture and sophistication that complemented his drive.

She became interested in every religion, and the approaches they might have to healing Jack. She called me one day and said, "I've found our savior." For a while, I had been the savior, but then when I didn't cure anything I wasn't quite the savior. This one was a Tibetan faith healer. She delved into Buddhism,

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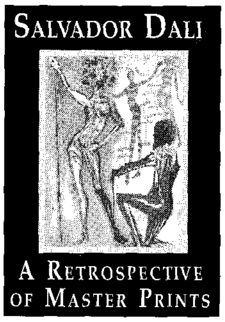

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into Hinduism, and finally I said, "Mrs. Warner, I've always wondered, What religion are you? Aren't you Jewish?" She said, "Darling, I'm anything you want me to be."

She had these great little sayings. She'd say, "Give your wife a kiss for me." And I'd say, "Where should I kiss her?" And she'd say, "In all the old familiar places." My wife, Larraine, would call Mrs. Warner to brag after she'd been out at some affair and say, "Everybody was staring at me. I must have looked really good." And Mrs. Warner would say, "Darling, people will stare at a snake," to bring her down to earth.

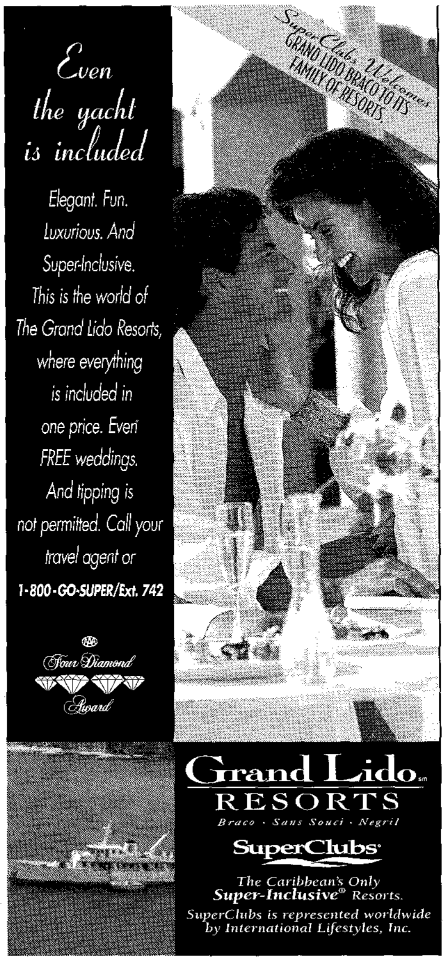
LARRAINE ROSNER (*interviewed 1995*): I was going through some turmoil with Louis in 1978 and Ann let me stay at the house while she was at the hospital with Jack. She was on the phone with me while he was dying. He was unconscious, and a whole team was trying to revive him, but it was hopeless. She kept saying, "His little foot is going so fast. It's going so fast." He was having some type of spasm, and she was standing in the doorway and that was all she could see.

Then, when he died, she asked me to tell everybody at the house. So I did, and, even though he had been sick for many years, they were all in complete shock.

The day of Jack's funeral was very painful for Ann. I remember the amount of anxiety it caused her to leave that house after all those years. There was going to be a big crowd, and she would be on public view. Nixon called her twice from San Clemente and said, "You have to do it." She always said, "He is the one who helped me leave the house."

JACK WARNER, JR.: Ann decided to make it a small funeral, with only the nurses and a few others. Then someone must have told her, "If you don't invite his son, he could very well sue you." Suddenly the phone rang, and some man from my father's office said, "Can you be at your father's funeral the day after tomorrow?" And I said, "Certainly." I took my wife and my two daughters, and we went to Rabbi Magnin's Wilshire Boulevard Temple. It was a strange experience. I hadn't seen Ann since my father's car accident. She'd put on a tremendous amount of weight. And she wore muumuus, no dresses anymore. She came up the stairs with her two daughters, and people clustered around her. I went right over to her and said, "I'm so sorry, Ann, about what happened." She didn't say a word, just looked at me, and I stepped aside and let her go in.

BARBARA WARNER HOWARD: I was always told that Jack, Jr., was a terrible person, and that he was only after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money. Which, unfortunately, poor man, he really wasn't. He wanted love. My mother thought he would sue after my father passed away, and of course he didn't. He was left a little money and he accepted that. Irrational fear is the only term I can give to her feelings for Jack, Jr. All those years she tortured herself with it, and it was sad for both of them.

I remember seeing him at my father's funeral, and we acknowledged each other without talking. My mother had the coffin covered with red carnations—which my father used to love. Every morning on his way to the studio he'd pull out one for his boutonnière from a vase by the front door.

PATRICK FOULK: I was up at the house a few times before Jack went to the hospital. By that time, he wasn't the same jackass he'd been when he was in power. He hated dying. So we became a little closer. Then, after he died, Ann had a big house and a squad of people, but she was very alone. I kept going up there, and she suggested that I come there to live. So I lived at her house for the next twelve years.

Once Cary Grant called and said, "Annie, let's get the hell out of this goddam town. Let's go somewhere where you can just be yourself and have some fun." That was about a year before he died. But Ann was very aware of her role as Mrs. Warner.

She was a person who would stay up all night and then sleep in the day. There would be days when I wouldn't see her, but I was always talking to her on the phone. Sometimes I'd sleep upstairs in a room of Jack's, just to be close. There might be an earthquake or it'd be raining, and we'd talk and that would make her feel good, and me, too. She was incredibly brave, but she liked to feel a kind of security. Over the last year or two, when she was diabetic, the nurses were there around the clock, giving her insulin. But it wasn't like a sickroom: everyone was very cheerful and so was Ann.

JAN IVAL (*interviewed 1995*): I worked as a butler and a chauffeur for Mrs. Warner for twelve years. I had a little house in the back, whose windows faced the hill, and you could see deer and coyotes. I come from a very distin-

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guished Spanish family in Chile, much better than the Warners. Mrs. Warner loved that. She would tell stories about her youth on a Southern plantation, but I personally think she made them up. She acted her life like a scene from "Gone with the Wind." She had an explosive character.

Once we were driving to a little joint she had read about in the newspaper: it was a long way out of town, and she wanted to stop and ask for directions. I said, "We're not lost, and I'm not going to stop." So she opened the door of the car and tried to jump out. I had to grab her by one arm and pull her back in.

We'd go out to dinner almost every night. In the beginning, she was afraid to have people see what she looked like. Then she saw that no one recognized her, so she didn't care. Sometimes if it was a fancy restaurant or somewhere she didn't want to give her name, I would make the reservation, and she would pass me money under the table to pay.

One day we were driving down Third Street, and Mrs. Warner saw a man with a cook's hat on. She said, "Look! There must be a restaurant somewhere." So we drove back, and there was a little restaurant on the side street. It was kind of shabby and dark but very clean. Every table was taken, and there was a counter at the end with a display case full of chicken wings and mashed potatoes. Mrs. Warner told the man behind the counter that she wanted the chicken wings. He said, "You have to pay first." So I went down to the register, and the woman said, "Let me see your Social Security card." It was a welfare restaurant. So I went back to Mrs. Warner and dragged her out. She said, "But the food looked good, and the people looked so happy eating it." And I told her, "Mrs. Warner, this is a welfare place where you have to leave your Social Security number, and I don't think it would look right to have Mrs. Jack Warner eating here." She said, "I want my wings." So I took her to the car, went back in, passed over my Social Security card, paid a dollar, and took the wings out to her.

When I was driving her to the hospital for the last time, we passed a little coffee shop and she said, "Let's go in." She ordered chili beans and they were very hot. There was a jug of cream for the coffee, and she poured it onto the beans. Then she said to me, "Maybe this is my last dinner." She had humor, even though she knew that she wasn't going to live very long.

LOUIS ROSNER: Mrs. Warner was at Cedars-Sinai in the intensive-care unit with a rare lung disease, and there was a point where the question was "Was the case salvageable now?" and I wanted to keep fighting for her. But her daughter Barbara had signed a do-not-resuscitate order. So I talked to the doctor in charge, Dr. Mills, and protested it. But he felt that to put tubes in her throat and all of these things in her veins and to keep her respirator going would be torture.

LIFE IS JUST A DREAM

JACK WARNER, JR.: When Ann died, in March, 1990, there was an obituary in the Los Angeles *Times.* It was written by someone who had never known her, and they used a picture of some strange lady. I don't know who the hell it was. So I phoned the obituary editor and asked, "Who's that lady you had on Ann Warner's obituary?" She said, "I don't know." "You'd better check, because it's not her." All she said was "Oh, my God."

BARBARA WARNER HOWARD: A couple of months later, I went to visit Mother's grave to see how everything looked. As I was driving out of the Jewish cemetery, I saw a chapel with a huge Nazi flag on it. I thought I was dreaming, and suddenly I felt a little scared, because the cemetery was completely deserted. So I drove around this chapel, and on the other side there were picnic tables and a film crew. They were shooting a movie, and they had just rented the building. I went back to the main office, and I don't think I've ever been so angry in my life. I said, "I don't care how much money they're giving you, you don't let them desecrate a Jewish cemetery by hanging a Nazi flag!" At the same time, it was hilarious. It was better than a Mel Brooks movie. ♦

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FEASTING ON LIFE

The American appetites of a girl from Whittier.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

If you woke me up in the middle of the night and asked me which piece of writing by M. F. K. Fisher I liked best, I would probably say the chapter on making meals during blackouts in "How to Cook a Wolf," a book published during the Second World War. Fisher takes the problem seriously. Don't curse God and die, she says. Cheer up! You *can* feed that family with no fresh foods, no electricity, no gas, no light, and no conviction that you'll be alive tomorrow.

Let's see. "Now would be a good time to get out the old chafing dish." Do your cooking during the day, while there is still light. Lay in a "blackout cupboard" of prepared foods, including, she says—with what must have been a major gut-clenching, for she was a great gourmet—"cheeses in glass." Yes, Cheez Whiz, or whatever it was called in 1942. "In a time of peril and unspoken fear," she explains, cheese, any cheese, is "an anesthetic. . . . Put a little bit on crackers, or on crisp toast if your oven is still working. Try it on a tired factory worker some day, or a nervous neighbor, with a glass of milk if possible or a cup of tea, and watch the unfolding of a lot of spiritual tendrils that were drawn up into a tight heedless tangle."

I missed the Second World War and can only pretend to picture in my mind the things I read in Primo Levi, for example. But in this image of a woman holding out Cheez Whiz on a cracker to a neighbor whose son is late coming home from the munitions factory, I get as close as I ever will to knowing what the war was like for those who survived it.

The moral beauty of Fisher's writing is not easy to talk about, because such a fuss has been made over it. Fisher published her first book in 1937 and for the next twenty-five years had only a modest readership. Then, in the sixties and seventies, her small craft was suddenly borne aloft on the upheavals of that era: the food revolution, the sexual revolution, the women's movement, all of them doubly strong in her home state of California. She became a hero, a prophet of the food/sex sacramentalism of the period. Today, six years after her death, her cult still flourishes. Seventeen of her twenty-six books are still, or back, in print, including a few that needn't be. And that's not counting the spinoffs. Last year, we got "A Welcoming Life: The M. F. K. Fisher Scrapbook" (Counterpoint; $35), with countless photographs of her—wineglass in hand—flanked by nuggety quotes from her writings. Now, from the same publisher, we have "A Life in Letters: Correspondence 1929-1991" ($35), five hundred pages long.

One thing the letters tell us is how bewildered she was by the sudden attention she received in her late years, and how resistant to the politics behind it. The food revolution receives tart comment ("I do dislike huge piles of *sprouts* in things"). Ditto feminism. Like other freethinking women of her generation—Doris Lessing, Mary McCarthy—she had misgivings about her jackbooted legatees. Most of all, she disliked the sex angle, the idea that she was the one who initiated the "sensuous gourmet" trend in food writing. Actually, she probably did initiate it. She spoke often of the pleasures of the flesh, in such a way as to indicate that she didn't just mean eating, and occasionally she unloaded a full, hundred-pound sententia on the subject, as in her foreword to "The Gastronomical Me," in 1943. People often asked her, she said, why she chose to be a food writer—why she didn't write about "the struggle for power and security, and about love, the way others do." And her answer was: "It seems to me that our three basic needs, for food and security and love, are so mixed and mingled and entwined that we cannot straightly think of one without the others. So it happens that when I write about hunger I am really writing about love and the hunger for it, and warmth and the love of it and the hunger for it . . . and then the warmth and richness and fine reality of hunger satisfied . . . and it is all one." (Ellipses hers.)

These Khalil Gibran-like words have been quoted again and again—they are the theme song of the Fisher cult—but they represent her poorly. She thought and wrote better than that, as one can find out by going back to her books. Now one can go to the letters, too. As they reveal, food and security and love were not her only basic needs. She had a fourth one: writing. Furthermore, food and security and love were not all one. Food was easier to get.

Mary Frances Kennedy, who later married Alfred Fisher, was born in Albion, Michigan, in 1908. When she was two, the family moved to California—to the Quaker town of Whittier, where Richard Nixon, whose favorite dish was cottage cheese and ketchup, was growing up at the same time. She adored California, and, like other artists born or, more often, transplanted there (Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham), she regarded it as a fundamental source of her identity. "I really started to be me somewhere there," she said. The family lived outside town, on a ranch with an orchard and chickens and a pig and a cow and a horse named Hi-Ho Silver. She embraced the bright air, the black soil, and these things gave her the courage to rebel against her family's low-church attitudes, at least in the kitchen. She was a gourmet from childhood: on the cook's night off, she made dinner. She was also a journalist from childhood: her father, a fourth-generation newspaperman, was the owner

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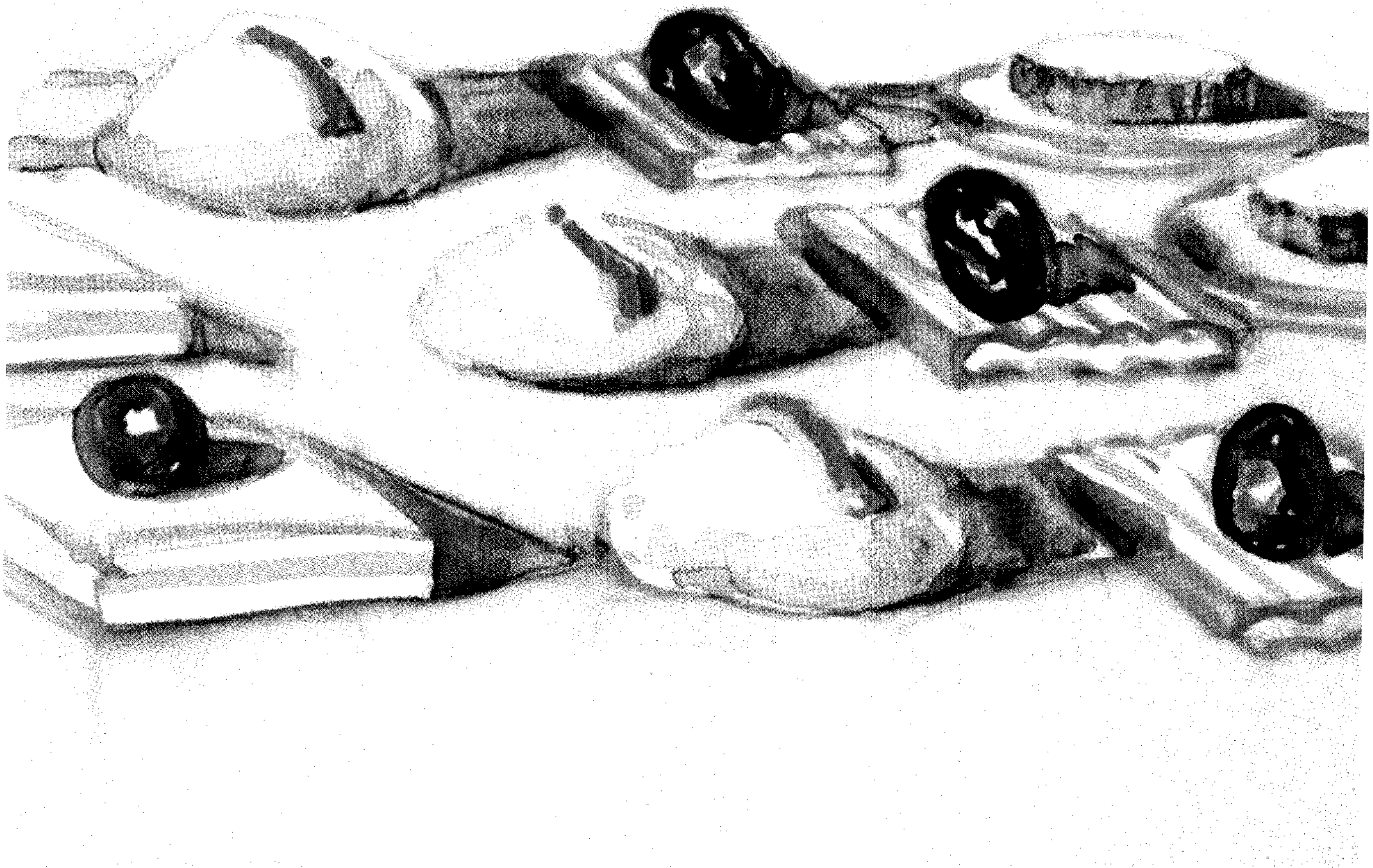

M. F. K. Fisher (opposite) in New York in 1945. And Wayne Thiebaud's "Appetizers," from the 1994 edition of Brillat-Savarin's "The Physiology of Taste," translated by Fisher in 1949.

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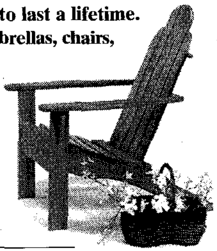

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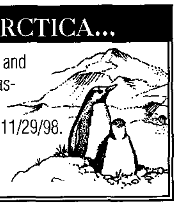

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and editor of the Whittier *News*, and by the time she was a teen-ager he had her subbing for the gardening and society columnists—even the sportswriter—when they went on vacation.

Like so many good writers, she was an indifferent student, and, no doubt, it was partly to get out of having to finish college that in 1929 she married Al Fisher, a young academic. Soon they took off for Dijon, he to write his dissertation, she to take art classes, and she fell in love with France—a passion that would remain with her for the rest of her life. In a letter to her sister Anne, age nineteen, she describes the natives:

> French people eat the most intricate entrails of everything from the horse to the snail; they have perfectly awful table manners, mop up their plates after each course with a piece of bread, change napkins once a week, and have little supports on which you put your knife and fork after a course; the men go casually into any of the fifty thousand open-air johnnies that seem to line the streets, and then spend half a block nonchalantly buttoning up their trousers.

In a letter to her brother David, age ten, she tells how a French sommelier opens a bottle of wine:

> Drawing the cork is a great ceremony—waiters cluster around the wine-master, and the man who has ordered it listens anxiously to see if the pop sounds right. Then the cork is waved under his nose, and he sniffs it loudly. Finally the wine is poured, still in the cradle, into his glass, and he sips it slowly and with the most amazing noises. The waiters and the wine-master watch his face to see if he likes it, and finally go away.

She was twenty-one. She was a writer already; she just didn't know it.

Nor, beyond letter-writing, did she try it until about five years later, when she began to think of leaving Al. She knew she would need money, so she started writing magazine pieces. Soon she fell in love with a friend, Dillwyn Parrish, a painter from a family of painters. (Maxfield Parrish was a cousin of his.) She went off to live with him in Switzerland, and now she discovered something: sex. As comes out very gradually in the letters, this was not part of her relationship with Al. The son of a Presbyterian minister, he was "frightened and repelled by the actual physical act of love." With Parrish it was different. He uncorked her. They gardened, they picnicked, they talked for hours on end. He painted, she wrote; she became a writer at last. They made love. This went on for a year. In 1938, Dillwyn developed an embolism in his leg, and the leg was amputated,

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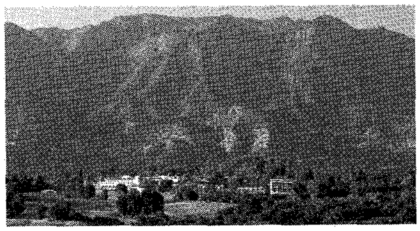

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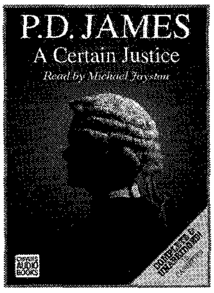

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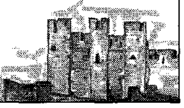

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but the pain didn't go away. Soon his condition was diagnosed as Buerger's disease, a fatal circulatory disorder. They moved back to the United States and got married, but they had no hope. "He can't walk at all unless I hold him," she wrote to a friend. "His pain is terrible to think of." Finally, in 1941, after three years of anguish, he killed himself.

Fisher's life went into a tailspin. A year after Dillwyn's suicide, her brother David also committed suicide, the night before he was to go into the Army. The year after that, Fisher gave birth to an illegitimate child—her first daughter, Anne. (She told everyone the child was adopted. She never revealed who the father was.) Two years after that, on a trip to New York, she met a dashing book editor, Donald Friede, and though she seems never to have trusted him—he had already been through five wives—within two weeks she became the sixth. (She telegraphed a friend: "I ACCIDENTALLY GOT MARRIED SATURDAY TO DONALD FRIEDE.") In 1946, she had his baby, her second daughter, Mary. But before long Friede's publishing career was in ruins, and he was in the throes of a mental breakdown. In 1951, she divorced him, after six years of marriage.

She remained unbroken. From 1937 to 1949, through grief and hell, she published nine books. I guess we should pause for a minute over the fact that she became a writer once she had become a sexual being. But a minute is enough. Twenty-nine was not a late age for a woman of her generation to be publishing her first book, and, as I said, she needed money. The notable thing is not that sex opened her up but that the complications and disasters that followed did not close her down again. "How to Cook a Wolf," that brave, happy book, was dictated to her sister Norah, at the typewriter, as Fisher, still in black grief over Dillwyn, paced up and down in the house where he had shot himself only months before. "The Gastronomical Me," which followed a year later, was "conceived and written and typed in ten weeks," as she did other work on the side and gestated a fatherless child.

Then came an experience, seemingly benign, that did almost break her. In 1949, her mother, bedridden for nearly a decade, died. Her father now needed someone to run his house, and Fisher, his oldest child, decided she should do it. For four years, she remained in Whit-

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It's awe-inspiring—and somewhat humbling—to realize that virtually anything at all in our limitless shared universe can serve as grist for the writer's creative mill, from the farthest star to the smallest insect.

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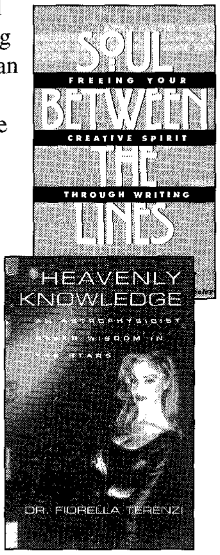
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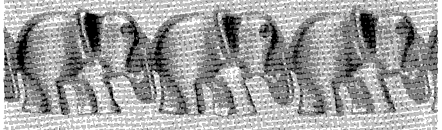

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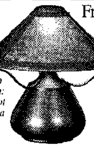

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tier—a conservative town where she no longer felt comfortable—cooking, cleaning, running around after her daughters, and watching her father, who was dying of pulmonary fibrosis, hawk up phlegm and spit it into the fireplace. She had no one to talk to. She began having spells of depression and, if I read her correctly, severe anxiety attacks. She began seeing a psychiatrist.

During this whole period, she wrote next to nothing, apart from columns, including her father's, for the Whittier *News*. (This was part of the deal. As long as she was there to help with the paper, he didn't have to sell it, though he was far too old and sick to run it.) She stopped thinking of herself as a writer. Rather, as she wrote to Norah, she was "a genteel has-been now and then asked to speak ten minutes at an arty tea." This state of mind continued long past her father's death, in 1953. She who had published nine books in twelve years brought out not a single new book in the twelve years after she moved into her father's house. Those who lament the dissolution of the American family—kids with no way to get to Girl Scouts, aging parents put into nursing homes—should remember what it was that kept the American family together: women's blood.

ONCE Fisher's father had died, she moved to St. Helena, in the Napa Valley—a region she loved—and learned to be happy again: "I stand dreaming at the windows. The vineyards are waist-high with wild mustard now. We walk along the little roads, humming and listening to the birds, with mimosa in our topknots." The rest of her life was spent in the Napa and Sonoma Valleys, with occasional stays in Switzerland or her beloved France. She had a few affairs, including one with Arnold Gingrich, the editor of *Esquire* and an important figure in the New York magazine world. He was married, but it seems they had fun for a time. She never again thought of herself as having a major talent—or, if she did, such thoughts were quickly displaced by the daughters, the dogs, the cats, and the endless parade of guests whom she loved to cook for. As she wrote to a friend in 1947, she wanted to be a good writer, "but I also want children and love and stress and panic and in the end I am too tired to write with the nun-like ascetic self-denial and concentration it takes."

Actually, after her dry spell between 1949 and 1961, she published fourteen more books, including "Map of Another Town" (1964), on Aix-en-Provence; "A Considerable Town" (1978), on Marseilles; "As They Were" (1982), a memoir; and "Sister Age" (1983), on old age. Yet she never ceased to speak slightingly of her work. Her best book, she decided, was "A Cordiall Water," on home remedies: "It is a rather comforting little book, the kind to be read on an air-trip or during childbirth maybe."

She grew old early, and seems to have wanted to. She had a consuming interest in aging. (She was in her twenties when she began collecting the materials for "Sister Age," published when she was seventy-four.) The years were not kind to her. By her sixties, she had severe arthritis, so that eventually she could neither type nor write by hand, and had to dictate her work to a secretary. By her seventies, her eyesight was going, and she had Parkinson's, which also affected her voice. Now she had to whisper her work to the secretary. Still, she was a fine, grouchy old lady. When her friends whined about their problems, she told them to shape up. When she got tired of family Christmases, she bowed out, and spent the day listening to records and drinking a bottle of champagne by herself. Always plainspoken, she became more so. The people who had her to dinner on February 19, 1970, are not going to be happy to learn what she thought of their "turd-like sausages" and "meaningless vinaigrette."

These are superb letters—long, meaty, intimate, conversational. You can practically hear her breathing. And they remind us of her faithfulness to reality, her ability to let things stay mixed and strange—to let them grow at the edges and stay loose in the center. This is one of the glories of her books. I am thinking, for example, of the great chapter in "Map of Another Town" where she describes the cavalcade of disastrous housemaids—"nitwits, sick old whores and dipsomaniacs"—who trooped through her pension in Aix: Marie-Claude, so blind that she drove her bicycle into a truck; Marie-Claire, like Rochester's wife. In each case, amid the hilarity of the portrait, we get an account of what that woman endured during the Occupation, but there is no lifting of the hilarity. The chapter is like a little Mozart opera—a comedy with a tragedy buried in it.

This play of contrasts made her, at times, a very strange food writer. When she recalls a wonderful salad eaten on a

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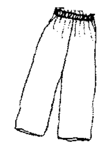

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—KAY RYAN

train, she praises the bugs in it almost as highly as the greens. And here is her portrait of the Marseillais:

> To me they are attractive, the way a magnet is: hard, perhaps ruthless but with real scruples and ethics. I have no desire for physical contact or any attempt at intimacy with them, but I love to be near them. I feel that I understand, at least empathetically, why they are made exactly as they are, short, compact, with small graceful hands and feet and faces of stone.

Sometimes she pushes the device too hard, and wears us out. Still, such anti-sentimentality is the mark of a fine mind—a higher form of irony—and it was part of her morality.

Fisher had another great virtue as a writer—an enormous tact, a sense of when to end, when to omit—but this blessing is not present in her letters, because they are letters. She is writing to Norah, or Gingrich, or whomever, and is unloading after a long day. So she tells them how she had to replace the clutch in the Caravelle and what she wore to the restaurant and who ordered what. Some of this should have been cut. And when she, like the rest of us, uses the same joke on three different correspondents, things should have been arranged so that we would encounter it only once. The editors—Norah Barr (the beloved sister), Marsha Moran (the secretary to whom she whispered her late works), and Patrick Moran ("a close family friend," the press release says)—were too indulgent. We also need many more footnotes. But never mind. This is a priceless book: a whole life, a serious life, eighty-four years long. You come out of it tired, as she did, and, like her, not necessarily smarter ("I don't feel very wise"), but less alone. ♦

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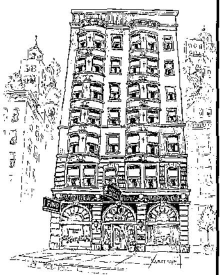

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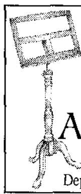

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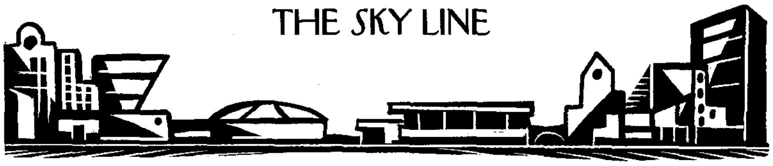
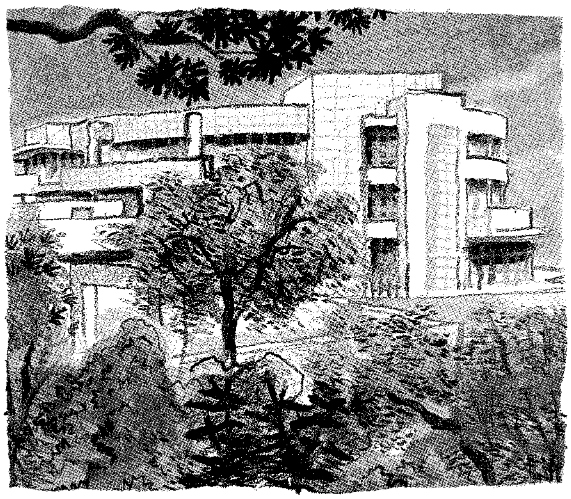


THE PEOPLE'S GETTY

How the city on a hill became a magnet for the masses.

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER



Visitors have come to the Getty on foot, by Rollerblade, by bus, and by bicycle.

GÉRARD NICOLAS

IT is a paradox of Southern California that you have to remove yourself from the city to have an urban experience—or at least an upbeat one. You get in your car and drive a long distance on the freeway so that you can walk around Disneyland, and who wouldn't rather stroll along Disney's Main Street U.S.A. than in downtown Los Angeles? People throng to CityWalk, at Universal Studios, which is a kind of theme park masquerading as a city street; in Beverly Hills, people come to play city at 2 Rodeo Drive, a shopping mall that is a stage-set version of a European street, its cobblestones rising gently over convenient underground parking.

The planners of the Getty Center, the billion-dollar complex of six buildings high atop a hill in the Brentwood section of Los Angeles, did not intend their work to be the latest addition to this list of alluring fantasy environments, but that is what it has become. In 1984, when the Getty Trust commissioned the architect Richard Meier to design this immense project, the goal was to create a campus for the display, conservation, and study of high art, housed in buildings as serious in their architectural ambition as the Getty would be in its scholarly mission. The Getty was not intended as a populist enterprise. Indeed, during the fifteen years of planning and construction, it was widely criticized as being the opposite—an élitist palace that would look down upon culture-starved Los Angeles with disdain.

And then, in December, the Getty opened, and the place that was supposed to be where California got a dose of serious culture has turned out to be, instead, where serious culture gets a dose of California. The most astonishing thing about the Getty could not be seen during the months of private pre-opening V.I.P. tours, and that is the way in which the public has embraced what was supposed to have repelled it. The surging crowds, more than double what the planners had projected, have redefined the Getty as one of those Southern California monuments in which a fantasy environment becomes the setting for a kind of enthusiastic, if ersatz, urban life.

The crowds frequently reach more than ten thousand a day. They wait patiently in line at the bottom of the hill for the white tramcars that will take them on a four-minute ride to the summit. (As at San Simeon and at Disneyland, automobiles are kept far away, so as not to spoil the purity of the stage set.) The crowds emerge onto a plaza that is the weakest part of Meier's design, but they swarm eagerly across it, buying cappuccinos, sitting at little café tables, and staring at Meier's sprawling compositions of glass, enamel panels, and stone as if they were looking not at high American corporate modernism but at a piazza in Tuscany.

Meier's style is a kind of romantic modernism, serious in intent, almost always beautiful in design and execution, but quite often viewed as cold. Yet the Getty is so popular that Meier has become something of a celebrity in Los Angeles. I walked through the Getty with him the other day, and I soon lost count of the number of times he was approached by strangers. People wanted to have their pictures taken with him; they asked him to autograph brochures, maps, napkins. It was like walking around with a rock star. The unexpected popularity of the Getty has made some critics uneasy: if the people like it this much, the thinking goes, it can't be that good, can it? The Getty's success proves something that we have known for a long time but rarely admit: high modern architecture of the sort that Meier produces is now fundamentally a conservative style. It connotes elegance and stability, not innovation, and while it is certainly not warm and inviting, neither is it threatening or hard to understand.

As a work of architecture, the Getty complex possesses all of Meier's strengths and a few significant weaknesses. Meier, unlike some of the neo-modernist architects who are his peers, is comfortable working at a monumental, civic scale, and he produces some spectacular effects. The rotunda at the entrance to the museum may be the finest interpretation of a classical rotunda in modernist garb ever built anywhere, and the long open courtyard within the museum turns out to be livelier, more serene, and grander as urban space than the piazza surrounding the tram stop. The galleries are excellent, with superbly controlled natural light, and Meier has organized them in a rhythm that allows frequent breaks onto outdoor terraces, so the experience of looking at art is gently mixed with views of the city and the opportunity to sip still more cappuccino. Although Meier objected when the architect-decorator Thierry Despont was hired to soften up many of the interiors, Despont's colored fabric in the painting galleries does the architecture little harm. His classical details in the decorative-arts section, however, are clunky and banal, turning Meier's strong spaces into fake period rooms.

Meier had a freer hand in some of the other buildings, particularly the Getty Research Institute, which consists of the library and the scholarly center, and which is one of his finest works ever—an exquisite circular building that melds geometric grace with precision of form. In other hands, modernism can feel industrial; Meier makes it breathtakingly lyrical. Still, one feels frustrated because the over-all effect of the Getty is so corporate and its tone so even. With a place as big as this, you need some other kind of element—a campanile, perhaps?—to punctuate the relentless consistency. The whole of the Getty always seems like less than the sum of its parts.

Visitors to the Getty spend most of their time in the museum, but they are encouraged to wander around the entire complex. With so many places to wander, to eat, and to shop, the average visit lasts almost four hours.

The allure of the place has also had an extraordinary effect on the way transportation works in Los Angeles. The Getty's planners had assumed that the limited number of parking spaces (there are only twelve hundred, allotted by advance reservation) would effectively control the number of visitors, and so it put no limit on the number of "walk-ins" it would admit, walk-ins being a rare species in Los Angeles. So much for knowing your audience. It has turned out that people have come on foot, by Rollerblade, by bus, and by bicycle; the taxi industry in Los Angeles has never had such a windfall; and ridership on the two public bus lines that pass the Getty's gates has ballooned. A whole industry has sprung up to get people to the Getty. Ten dollars will buy a parking space in, for example, the Holiday Inn's lot, and another five dollars per person will provide a seat on its private Getty shuttle van. (Prime hours at the Getty's own parking lot are booked through July.) Whatever the Getty's ultimate contribution to culture, it has already accomplished something that was always thought impossible: to get Angelenos to use alternative forms of transportation.

When Barry Munitz, the new president and C.E.O. of the Getty Trust, took over from Harold Williams, who retired after the opening, he pledged to steer away from the élitist image that had been established by his predecessor. Back then, no one realized that Williams and Meier, without particularly intending to, had done Munitz's work for him. Seeking to make a modernist cloister, they made a modernist town square. Now Munitz's challenge is to make sure that the Getty is remembered as something more than the most successful art theme park of all time. ♦

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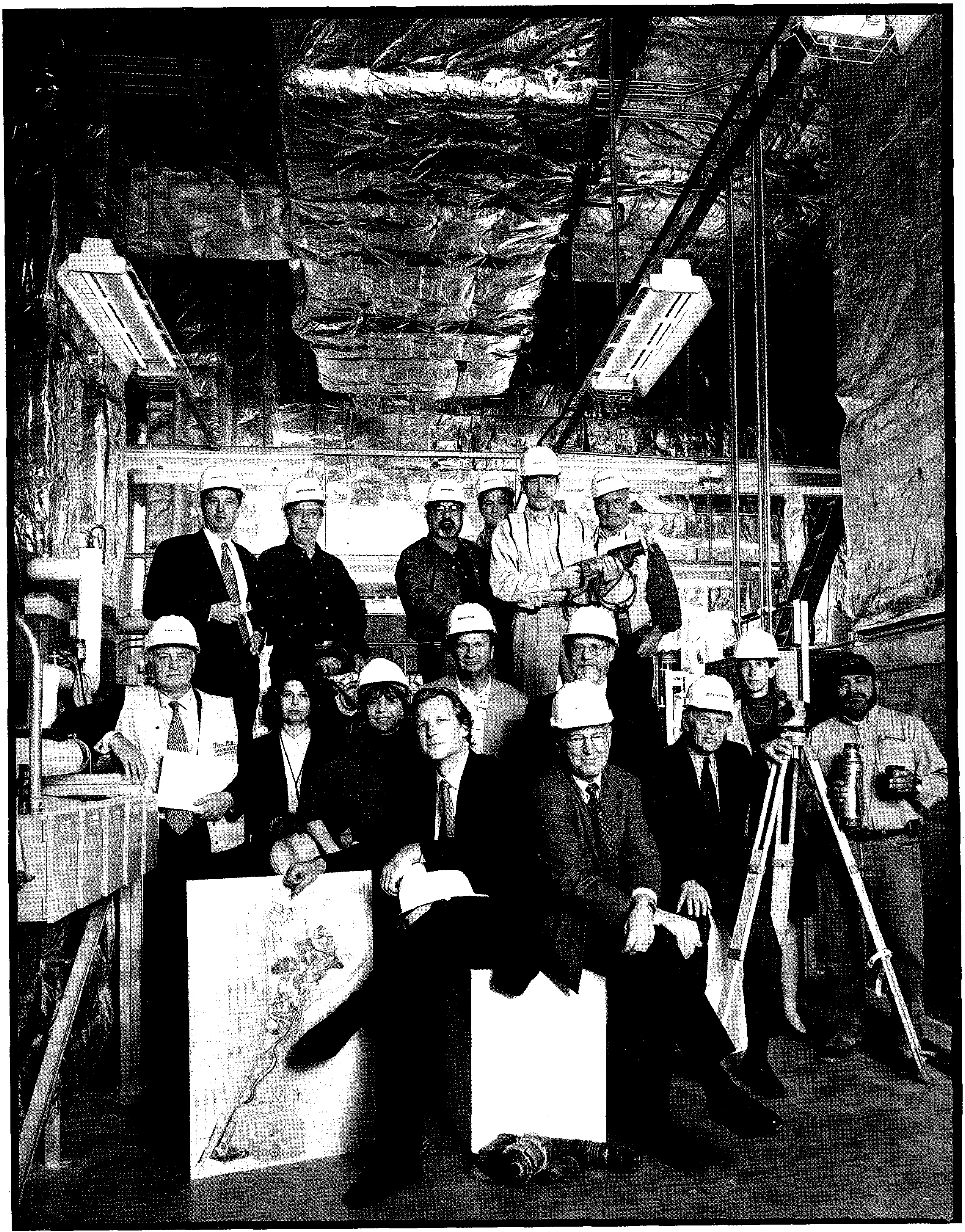

The Getty Center team: those who built it and those who dreamed it. Back row: Greg Cosko, president, Dinwiddie Construction; Rick Pribnow, engineering manager; Rudy Villasenor, Jr., Jim Hearn, Ron Bayek, and Gene Frey, construction superintendents; Charlotte Coulombe Schoenmann, Getty Trust administrative director; Richard Naranjo, grounds and gardens manager. Front row: Peter Mills, construction project director; Barbara Chiavelli and Elaine Nesbit, project managers; Michael Palladino, architect; George Kovacic, superintendent; Curt Williams, operations director; James Crawford and Don Barker, architects.

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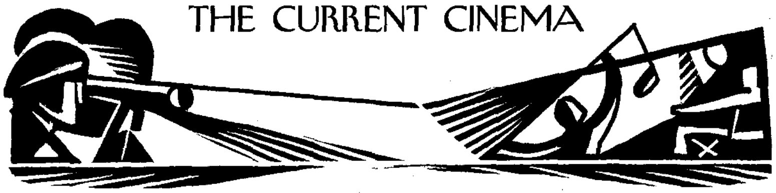

LO AND BEHOLD

Why can't America see the new "Lolita"?

BY ANTHONY LANE

A LITTLE girl is sitting on her father's lap, with her back to him, reading the funnies. Both parties are wearing pajamas. She is giggling. Gradually, the giggles become gasps. She is catching her breath. The pajamas are not quite in place. The girl is no longer reading. The man is not her father.

This scene comes from Adrian Lyne's new movie of Vladimir Nabokov's "Lolita," and may go some way toward explaining why the film is unlikely to be shown here. The issue depends on your definition of child pornography. Does it, for instance, mean "any visual depiction . . . of sexually explicit conduct, where"—and I quote, of course, from Subsection 8B of Section 2256 of Chapter 110 of Part I of Title 18, "Crimes and Criminal Procedure," of United States Code—"such visual depiction is, or appears to be, of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct"? That "appears to be" is the zinger, for the man in question is Humbert Humbert, played by Jeremy Irons, and the child is Dolores Haze, played by Dominique Swain, who at the time of filming was fourteen years old.

The irony is that the scene presents a witty sandwiching of Nabokov's themes: the sweat of semi-incest is not merely linked but synchronized with the innocent joy of trash culture. In France, needless to say, the coupling is on permanent view. In the city where Maurice Chevalier—creepier, in his bonhomous, tilt-hatted fashion, than any number of Humberts—publicly thanked heaven for little girls, "Lolita" can be viewed any day by anybody. Well, almost anybody: "Int.—12 Ans," say the movie listings, in unfortunate shorthand. The phrase sounds dirtier than anything onscreen, but it simply means that children under twelve are forbidden to see the movie. Quite right, too, although it is hard to imagine such children as the target audience for a story in which they themselves function generically as targets. One of the incidental benefits of Lyne's film is that it reminds us of the original fuss and flap of 1955, the year of the novel's publication, and of 1962, the year of Stanley Kubrick's adaptation; we pride ourselves on having got over those outrages, and it is salutary—even poignant—to rediscover an old shocker that still has the power to shock.

What surprises and shames us about Nabokov's masterpiece, however, is that we are so readily enchanted by matters that should properly repel us, and the new movie works the same trick. It is only a thin shadow of the novel—as any dramatization of the luminous "Lolita" is doomed to be—but it is by no means a travesty. The screenwriter, Stephen Schiff, a staff writer for this magazine, displays a careful, even loving, loyalty to the book; as familiar scenes and lines unroll before us—from the roaring icebox to the gumlike bubble of blood that swells and pops on the lips of the dying Quilty (Frank Langella)—we are reminded of the delicate art of non-transformation, of leaving well alone. In this respect, at least, Lyne's "Lolita," of which I had heard little but dispraise, marks an advance upon the Kubrick version, which mangled the novelist's own screenplay and became, in his words, "a blurred skimpy glimpse of the marvellous picture I imagined."

On the other hand, so deftly did James Mason fit and expand our sense of what Humbert is, or should be, that it takes a brave actor to squeeze into what is inescapably a Mason-shaped role. Jeremy Irons is leaner and lankier, and, where Mason's slow grin was wide enough to melt both mother and daughter, the new Humbert seems more pained by the obligation to smile than by his duties in the marital bed of Charlotte (Melanie

"It was she who seduced me." Dominique Swain as Lolita. Photograph by Michel Comte.

Griffith). One gift, of course, connects Mason and Irons: they boast two of the most beautiful voices in the history of cinema. The former gave us his Americanized Yorkshire with a faint serpentine hiss; the latter, a lonely drawl. Their only rivals, I think, would be Claude Rains and George Sanders—all of them exiled Englishmen who leave you with the abiding suspicion that there is something dangerous in the deracinated. And that is where Humbert comes in: with his dodgy French boyhood and his weakness for Baudelaire (himself no moral strongman), Humbert finds it not only convenient but arousing to take Lolita everywhere, for he is a man from nowhere. That Nabokov's novel is commonly thought to have ruptured a taboo is the least interesting thing about it; more crucial is the feeling that it waved farewell to romance—the last romantic hero in literature is a pervert, and how could he be anything else?—and, in particular, to the appeal of the cosmopolitan lover. One of Humbert's more insidious crimes is to make you wonder what his gentlemanly forefathers may have done to their daughters; with Isabel out of the way, for instance, what cracks might Gilbert Osmond have inflicted on the porcelain virtue of Pansy?

Jeremy Irons is right, and ripe, for these areas of promising moral rot. Once you've got an Oscar for impersonating Claus von Bulow, the prospect of Humbert Humbert must seem like a day at the office. Irons's best moment in the movie comes as Lolita, on the point of leaving for summer camp, jumps from the car and sprints upstairs for a goodbye kiss. The camera backs away in a pan-

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icky rush from poor Humbert, who has no time to prepare for the crown (so far) of his foul career; Irons fusses and pats his pajamas like a schoolboy awaiting the headmaster, or a visit from his parents. It is a tiny hint of the role reversal that will form the basis of his accurate but disreputable plea: "It was she who seduced me."

No one buys Humbert's excuses; Humbert himself offers them as you would a bowl of plastic fruit, aware that they are hollow. Still, it is hard not to wince at the moment, in both novel and film, when knowing Lo, resigned to her role as victim, begins to demand money for services rendered. If one frustrated pedophile feels himself vindicated by Lyne's "Lolita," and thus works up the steam to ply his trade, then the film will have blood on its hands; the question is whether we should have our moviegoing (or our reading) curtailed by that freak possibility. There is a case for arguing that more corrosive damage was done to American morals by the widespread viewing of two earlier Adrian Lyne pictures, "Fatal Attraction" and "Indecent Proposal," than could conceivably be caused by a brief art-house run of "Lolita." A generation of men came out of those raucous hits in the vague belief that women were either mad harridans or gambling chips; Lyne shows far more respect for Dominique Swain than he ever did for Glenn Close or Demi Moore. Thankfully, the dreary erotic gag of her first appearance on the lawn—sprinklers spurting behind her behind—makes way for a more sober style. (Apparently, Miss Swain's mother attended the production in the role of on-set chaperone: a deliciously Charlotte-like deal.) The actress is too old for the part, but, with her leg-swinging boredom and the braces on her teeth, she is not too beautiful, and her untrammelled vitality, which makes Kubrick's Sue Lyon look comatose, allows Lolita to stand proud of Humbert's solipsism, to be more than the sum of his lusts.

None of these niceties, presumably, will dent the determination of the major studios, and it will take a bold (and probably minor) distributor to pick up the movie, much as the novel itself was first issued by a publishing house of known lubricity. It is all too easy, as a Nabokov lover, to forget that for many people out there, especially those who have never read it, "Lolita" remains a dirty book. What chance for the film, then, in a land still ruffled by the unsolved slaughter of a six-year-old beauty queen? The image of Dolores Haze, complete with smeary lipstick and a rocketing temperature, spreading her legs for her legal guardian would not, let us say, sit happily with that of a rouged and bejewelled JonBenet Ramsey. In the years since "Lolita" was written, child abuse has soared up the league of human vice until it is now viewed as worse than murder—understandably so, for it entails the violation of a soul.

In so febrile a climate, it might be prudent to pause before springing "Lolita" on American viewers uncut. Equally, it would be a pity to deny them a chance to make up their own minds, for there are lovely things here: Humbert hanging a sad sweater from a tree for target practice, or lighting a cigarette in a bone-white desert, with a backdrop of mountains already fired up. Apart from the gory *guignol* of Quilty's demise, Lyne has checked his natural hysteria and produced a slight, tender movie—not, I think, worth fighting a battle over, let alone bringing to trial. If anything, the film is not risky enough: it turns down the bright, rampant polyphony of Nabokov's creation until we are left with a tone of reedy regret. (The film is seldom funny; the novel is seldom anything but.) My overriding memory, as I left the cinema, was of Jeremy Irons quoting Humbert's reveries, in voice-over, to the sound of Ennio Morricone's wonderfully rueful score. Who would have thought that an infamous tale of underage rape would end up sounding like "Brideshead Revisited"? What Vladimir Nabokov, hunter of lost youth and scourge of nostalgia, would have made of it all, we can only guess. ♦

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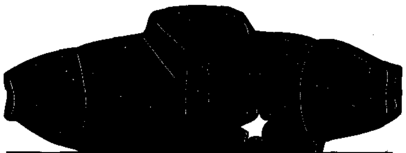

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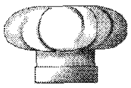

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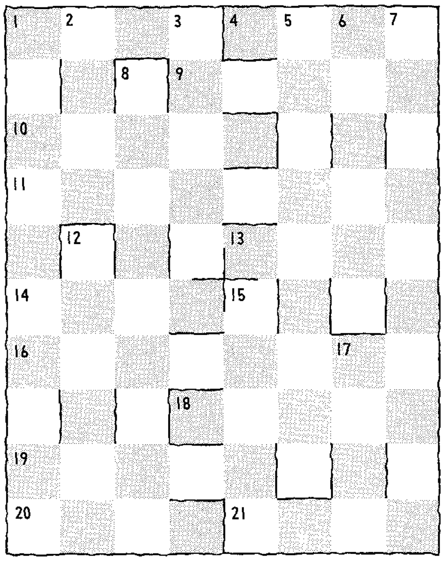

ACROSS

1 Made some music in Los Angeles (4)
4 Town of 1,000 engulfed in receding ocean (4)
9 Home of smeared adobe (5)
10 Area for true movie's début (5)
11 Blazes out of control in Fresno (8)
13 Bit a Mr. Selleck (4)
14 Smog finally consumed something golden in San Francisco? (4)
16 Dealing with giant rocks after first half of tremor (8)
18 Fly around western edge of Nevada with a detective device (5)
19 "It's the actress Shearer, or I'm a loony" (5)
20 Stats for Dodger pitchers' ages (4)
21 Mister T grabs a returning streetcar (4)

DOWN

1 Spanish call me after it's back in season (10)
2 So it is in Sacramento (4)
3 E.g., L.A.'s wild storms (5)
5 Tsunami, on shattering big hills (9)
6 Hollywood director cut the top off California tree (2,4)
7 Shaky, as some grim earthquake record (10)
8 After California party, wind up in an eatery (9)
12 Bay feature with high shady spot (6)
15 Little kids flipped, eating California's last weasel (5)
17 Snooze at a wine-making valley (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 33 appears on page 171. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

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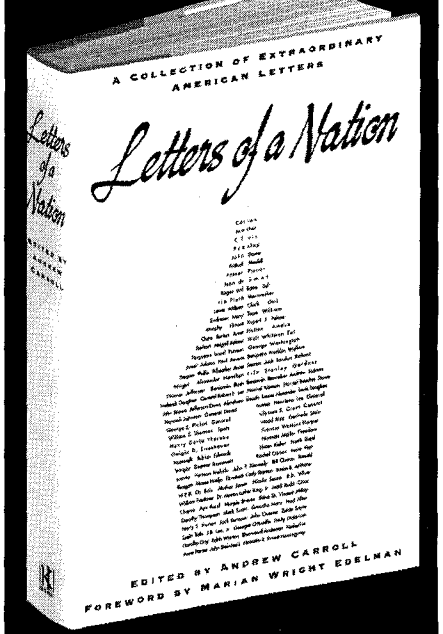
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TAPING MY FRIENDS

BY STEVE MARTIN

Jerome
(friend, twenty-two years)

Me: . . . Does your wife know?

Jerome: I hope she doesn't find out.

Me: Find out what?

Jerome: What I told you yesterday.

Me: Right. I remember what you told me yesterday, but the way you said it was so poignant. Would you say it?

Jerome: I just don't want her to find out about my having a drink with that waitress. I was so dumb.

Me: So you definitely had a drink with the waitress.

Jerome: [*inaudible*]

Me: Sorry?

Jerome: I had a drink with the waitress.

Me: Whose name was?

Jerome: Dinah. Are you having memory problems?

Me: Yes. Could you recap?

Jerome: I had a drink with the waitress, Dinah.

Me: Let's keep this between us.

Jerome: Thanks, man.

Virginia
(ex-girlfriend)

Virginia: I'm feeling so guilty about what we did.

Me: Can you hang on a minute?

[*sound of beep from tape recorder being turned on*]

Virginia: What was that?

Me: What?

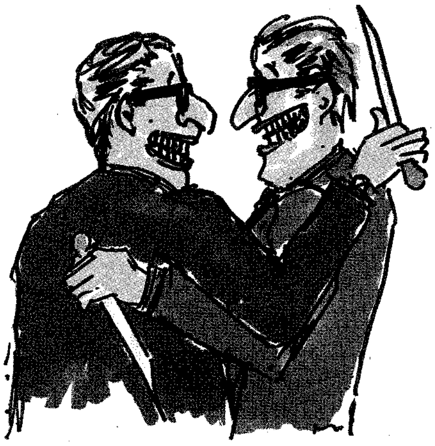
Virginia: That beep.

Me: Federal Express truck backing up. You feel guilty about what?

Virginia: You know, the other night. I'd feel terrible if Bob ever found out.

Me: How would he ever find out?

Virginia: So you won't tell?



Me: I can't believe you're asking me that.

Virginia: I'm sorry.

Me: Find out about what?

Virginia: You know. The kiss and the . . . you know.

Me: It was beautiful. I'd love for you to describe it.

Virginia: What a nice thing—you're so romantic now. When we were dating, I couldn't believe how cold you were, and how selfish—

[*sound of tape recorder being turned off*]

[*pause*]

[*sound of tape recorder being turned back on*]

Virginia: . . . separate checks, you loser. What was that beep?

Me: FedEx truck again, but get back to the kiss.

Virginia: Well, we had just had lunch and you walked me back to my apartment and we kissed by the mailboxes, and, you know.

Me: Who is we again?

Virginia: We? You and I.

Me: And your name is?

Virginia: Are you insane? I'm Virginia!

Me: I love it when you say your name. . . .

Mom
(mother)

Me: Mom, I'm really in a hurry and I can't remember what you told me twelve years ago about how upset you were with Dad's false tax return.

Mom: Well, let me think. I think he had underreported some income on his night job—we were so desperate. Remember, you needed that extra money for college?

Me: Oh, yeah.

Mom: You needed money for . . . I can't remember.

Me: To buy S.A.T. answers.

Mom: I can't hear you, son.

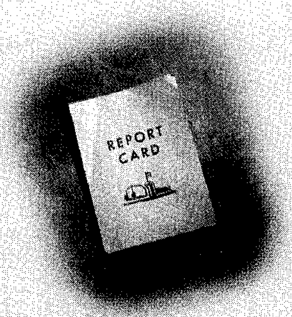
Me: I said . . . What was that beep?

Mom: FedEx truck backing up. You were saying?

Me: I needed cash to buy answers for my college entrance examination. But that's between us, Mom.

Mom: Of course, son. If you can't trust your mother, who can you trust? ♦

MICHAEL CRAWFORD



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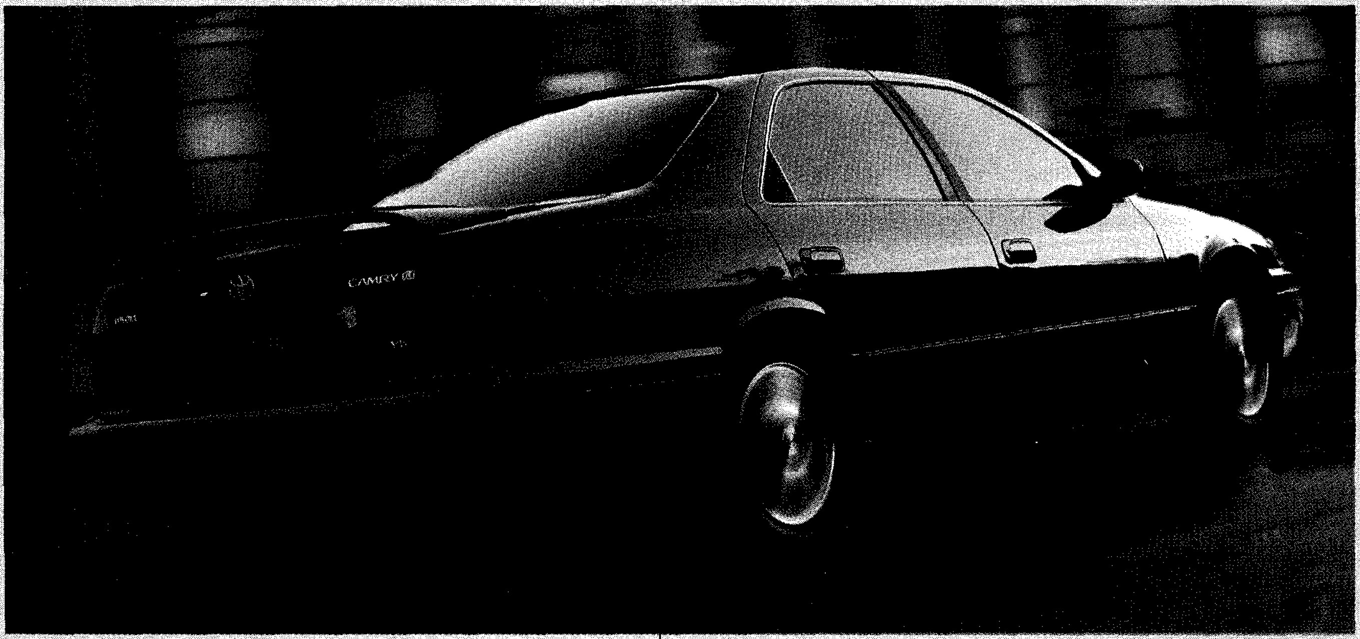

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